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Stalingrad Inferno

The Infantryman's War

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Introduction

There were many turning points in World War II; battles, campaigns, and invasions that changed the course of the war. The Battle for Stalingrad was the unquestioned turning point of the war on the Eastern Front. It was in this southern USSR city on the great Volga River where an entire German army, until now undefeated, was halted and destroyed in detail.

The Wehrmacht (Defense Force) was unleashed into the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, Operation Barbarossa, across a broad front. The shattered Red Army of Workers and Peasants reeled and then plunged back across the vast steppes and forests as the Germans pored into the Motherland. Hitler's indecisiveness and his orders to change the directions and objectives of his armies served not only to frustrate his commanders and aggravate logistical problems, but also confused Stalin and his hard-pressed generals. The directive for Operation Brunswick in late August redirected four German armies from the southern approaches to Moscow and from the Caucasus oil fields in the south to the great bend in the Don River south of Voronezh. The Soviets rushed reserve armies south to establish a defensive line across the top of the eastward pointing "V" of the Don River bend. Some of these were the "secret armies" deployed from Siberia. The point of this "V" was aimed at Stalingrad only some 70 kilometers to the east, itself sitting at the westward point of a bend in the Volga River. Hitler ordered Operation Brunswick to deny land communications between the Don and Volga Rivers and to seize Stain's City.

Stalingrad was an industrial city stretching almost 20 miles along the west bank of the Volga, the longest river in Europe. The concrete city was a monument to communism, an effort to establish a huge industrial center in the underdeveloped southern USSR. To Stalin it was the incubator of Bolshevism where in 1918, when it was known as Tsaritsyn, Stalin, Timoshenko, Budenny, and Voroshilov had defied Trotsky over his strategy of war against the White counterrevolutionaries, an episode that later launched Stalin's rise to power. The city was inhabited by half a million people in 1942. The battle was to become a contest between the iron wills of Hitler and Stalin, a horrendous battle of attrition in which soldiers on both sides made endless sacrifices.

The core of the city, its name changed to Stalingrad in 1925, was its monolithic factories of concrete and steel and workers' apartment blocks. Some of these would become familiar names constantly changing hands: the Red October Steel Factory, Dzerzhinsky Tractor Factory, Barricades Metallurgical Plant, the grain silo, and Univermag Department Store. The city was surrounded by sprawling suburbs of wooden workers' homes.

The Germans forced the Don River on 22 August and roared toward Stalingrad without pause. The 16. Panzer-Division reached the Volga north of Stalingrad the next day. Some 200,000 defenders, soldiers and civilians, frantically dug antitank ditches and trenches, built pillboxes, laid mines, and prepared for the onslaught. Stalin ordered the city to hold at all costs. The 4. Panzergruppe reached to Volga south of the city at the end of August. The Luftwaffe began pounding the city by launching a thousand-bomber attack. An estimated 40,000 defenders and civilians died during the first week. The 6. Armee and 4. Panzergruppe linked up on 3 September and the Germans now surrounded Stalingrad on the west side of the Volga.

No bridges crossed the Volga. All reinforcements and supplies had to be ferried across the two-kilometer wide river. The nearest railhead was 70 kilometers to the east. On 5 September the Germans were in the suburbs and on the 13th they fought their way into the city proper. Soviet losses were terrible with only a trickle of reinforcements, but the struggling defenders held on to the bluffs above the river never relinquishing a foothold. The Soviets launched a weak counterattack into northwest Stalingrad between 23 and 26 September, but the Germans defeated it and even made further gains.

Stalingrad experienced its first lull on 11 October and significant Soviet reinforcements began to arrive later in the month. The Germans had been making gradual headway in the fighting in the Tractor Factory area in the northern portion of the city. Five divisions had been committed to this grinding stone. On 22 October the first snow fell on Stalingrad. The Germans launched an attack within the city on 11 November, but it fragmented within two days and was halted. This was to be the last major German attack. The Soviets launched their counteroffensive, Uranus, on 19 November by crossing the frozen Volga north and south of the city in a wide encircling attack. The Germans and their unreliable allies protecting their flanks were driven back and the encirclement was slammed shut on 23 November. The Soviet goal was to totally destroy the now cutoff Stalingrad garrison before continuing the offensive westward. Some 265,000 Germans, including 12,000 Romanians, were trapped. The Luftwaffe made a futile effort to supply the beleaguered 6. Armee with the necessary 500 tons of supplies and munitions a day, but could not come close to that goal because of the lack of transports, brutal weather, and enemy action. The largest daily delivery achieved only 180 tons on 14 December.

The Soviet 64th Army poured troops across the river and the Germans struggled to hold out as casualties mounted and ammunition and rations dwindled. On 12 December, 57. Panzerkorps launched an attack toward Stalingrad with the goal of relieving 6. Armee, Wintergewitter (Winter Storm) under Generalfeldmarschall Erich von Manstein. Headway was poor as the Soviets had expected such a desperate effort and had positioned forces to counter it. On 18 December the corps commander requested that 6. Armee breakout to link-up with him; he had pushed eastward as far as he could. Hitler forbade the breakout unless the city could be retained under German control; an impossible demand. The 6. Armee was doomed. Von Paulus himself was reluctant and claimed he did not possess enough fuel, which was partly true, but he made no effort to aid in his own relief by even conducting divisionary attacks to the relief force. The day before the Volga had frozen over to greatly enhance the Soviet supply and reinforcement effort. Drifting ice blocks had been hampering boat traffic. The relief effort failed and was in full retreat by the 26th.

On 8 January the Don Front commander offered von Paulus surrender terms, but he refused. The final Soviet offensive to destroy 6. Armee commenced two days later. By 17 January 1943 amidst appalling winter conditions the German perimeter had been reduced to one-third its original size and split into two pockets on the 25th. The exhausted, freezing defenders had no chance now. On 31 January Generalfeldmarschall von Paulus surrendered with the southern pocket. The northern pocket continued to resist until 2 February.

Over 91,000 German and Romanian prisoners staggered eastward across the wind-blasted frozen steppes and few ever returned. The Soviets claim to have reburied 147,000 German and Romanian and 47,000 Soviet dead. Soviet losses were much higher though. The Luftwaffe lost 500 aircraft during the campaign, the Soviets over 2,000. For the entire Stalingrad Campaign, the drive to Stalingrad, the encirclement and adjacent battles, the attempted relief, and the subsequent withdrawal to the Don the Germans lost 400,000, the Romanians, 200,000, the Italians, 130,000, and the Hungarians 120,000. The Soviets lost 750,000 troops and 40,000 civilians in what many call the most brutal campaign of the war.

6. Armee Order of Battle, 1 December 1941

6. Armee	Generaloberst Friedrich von Paulus*
Armee Chef des Stabs	Generalleutnant Arthur Schmidt
14. Panzer-Division	Oberst Martin Lattmann†
384. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Freiherr Eccard von Gablenz
9. Flak-Division (motorisiert)	Generalmajor Wolfgang Pickert
IV. Armeekorps	General der Pionere Erwin Jaenecke
29. Infanterie-Division (motorisiert)	Generalmajor Ernst Leyser
297. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Max Pfeffer
371. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Richard Stempel
20. rumänische Infanterie-Division	Generalmajor Nicolae Tataranu
VIII. Armeekorps	General der Artillerie Walter Heitz
44. Infanterie-Division	Generalmajor Heinrich Deboi
76. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Carl Rodenburg
113. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Hans-Heinrich Sixt von Armin
XI. Armeekorps	General der Infanterie Karl Strecker
16. Panzer-Division	Generalleutnant Günther Angern
24. Panzer-Division	Generalmajor Arno von Lenski
60. Infanterie-Division (motorisiert)	Oberst Hans-Adolf von Arenstorff-Oyle†
94. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Georg Pfeiffer
XIV. Panzerkorps	General der Panzertruppen Hans Hube
3. Infanterie-Division (motorisiert)	Generalleutnant Helmuth Schlömer
376. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Edler von Daniels
1. rumänische Kavallerie-Division	Generalmajor Constaintin Bratescu
LI. Armeekorps	General der Artillerie Walther von Seydlitz-Kurzbach
71. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Alexander von Hartmann
79. Infanterie-Division	Generalleutnant Richard von Schwerin
100. Jäger-Division	Generalleutnant Werner Sanne
295. Infanterie-Division	Oberst Otto Korfes†
305. Infanterie-Division	Oberst Bernard Steinmetz†
389. Infanterie-Division	Generalmajor Erich Magnus

* Paulus was promoted to Generalfeldmarschall on 30 January 1943.

† Acting Division's Kommandeur.

Der Rattenkrieg

While German tanks, assault guns, and artillery played significant roles in the hopeless battle for Stalingrad it was largely an infantryman's war, and one of the most vicious kind—prolonged combat under a hurricane of fire, terrible winter conditions, and shortages of everything. There was no relief for five continuous months of grueling close-combat, no reinforcements, no replacements. Even when units were infrequently rotated into reserve or to "quiet" sectors they still had to deal with snipers, infiltrators, artillery, barrage rockets, air attacks, and endure the cruel cold and nagging hunger.

Conditions were beyond imagination. The troops were perpetually exhausted; bedeviled by fleas, lice, flies and rats; endured filthy conditions with the smell of feces, urine, sweat, festering wounds, and the countless dead, human and horses. Bodies were stacked in piles and burned. When freezing temperatures arrived they brought a relief of sorts in that bodies were left where they fell, friend and foe alike, to freeze solid. Dysentery, tetanus, spotted fever, typhus, and gangrene cost many their lives. The winter brought pneumonia and frostbite and with the latter came more gangrene. Men began dying of starvation in early January when the ration was cut from 120 grams to 70 grams of bread—one slice—a day. The horses had long ago been eaten and there were reports of cannibalism. Ammunition reserves had almost disappeared as had fuel long before. Repair parts, medical supplies, and replacement uniforms and equipment were non-existent.

Regardless of 6. Armee's three Panzer and three motorized infantry divisions, Stalingrad was an infantryman's battle. There were 15 infantry divisions with 45 infantry and Jäger regiments plus the remnants of two Romanian cavalry regiments fighting as infantry. The six motorized infantry regiments (they had not yet been redesignated Panzergrenadier) and the three Panzergrenadier regiments of the three Panzer-Divisions also found themselves fighting as foot infantry as their halftracks and trucks were knocked out, battle-damaged beyond repair, suffered un-repairable mechanical failures owing to the lack of parts, and finally the complete absence of fuel. The open-topped and lightly armored or soft-skin infantry transport vehicles were of little use within the city anyway as they were highly vulnerable to close attack. Tank and assault gun crews also soon became infantrymen as their vehicles met the same fates, exchanging their black uniforms for field gray from the dead. The many pioneer battalions, trained to support assaults, also largely served as infantrymen. Luftwaffe ground service personnel and Flak troops, and Heer rear service and police troops were sent in as infantrymen as well.

German soldiers, the Landser, fought a relentless war which they dubbed the Rattenkrieg (rat war). They lived and fought as rats amid the rubble of concrete, bricks, twisted steel fighting in collapsed factory carcasses, gutted buildings, shattered and burnt wooden houses, cellars, sewers, trenches, and holes. To emphasize the life of the German infantryman in such an environment we have included a sampling of the colorful Landser-sprache (soldier's speech). Landserdeutsch slang could be humorous, sarcastic, sober, pessimistic, fatalistic, and even defeatist at times. Many terms and phrases underplayed the dangers of combat, Das war prima! (That was first-rate!) describing a heavy artillery barrage for example. Regardless, it all displays the cynicism and recognition of the realities of wartime soldiering.

Das Regiment

To further examine the life of the Landser we will study the Infanterie Regiment to which he was assigned. The regiment was an important entity to the German soldier, officer and enlisted alike. The group (Gruppe)—squad was his family, the company (Kompanie) an extended family, and the regiment served as his clan. Even the company commander (Kompanie Chef) was often referred to as the Vater der Kompanie (Father of the company) and the reporting NCO (der Spieß), equivalent to an American first sergeant or British company sergeant major, was the Mutter der Kompanie (Mother of the company). In pre-war days the soldiers and NCOs would serve their entire time on active duty in the same regiment. In peacetime only 25-percent of career NCOs were allowed to remain on active duty for over 12 years; they were referred to as a Zwölfender (literally "twelver"). Even in wartime with regiments being decimated and rebuilt or split to organize new units; efforts were made to return wounded and ill soldiers to their original regiment if at all possible. The same applied to soldiers undertaking NCO and officer training. Returning convalescing soldiers would even be reassigned to their former company or platoon if possible. Officer candidates would initially serve in a regiment on six months probation after completing their training and before they were accepted by the unit officers and commissioned. This practice though ceased during the war with the high rate of officer losses. On the uniform the soldier identified his regiment by wearing its white number embroidered on his shoulder straps; NCOs wore silver-colored metal numbers and officers' were gold-colored. They were further identified as infantry by white edge piping—Waffenfarbe—on the shoulder straps and white underlay cloth on officer's shoulder boards. Jäger units wore light green and Panzergrenadiers grass green. Additionally, many regiments possessed an insignia, though this was not worn on uniforms, but may have marked unit vehicles and equipment.

The 3,250-man Infanterie-Regiment was commanded by a colonel (Oberst) and included a staff (Stab), mounted platoon (Reiterzug), pioneer platoon (Pionierzug), signal platoon (Nachrichtenzug), and a company-size light infantry column (leichte Infanterie Kolonne) (supplies, ammunition, baggage transport). The mounted platoon, used for scouting and as couriers, had often been converted to a cyclist platoon (Radfahrzug) or, less frequently, a motorcycle platoon (Kraftradzug) by this point of the war. There were three 850-man rifle battalions (Schützen-Bataillonen), designated I to III, each with a small staff, signal platoon, train (Tross) (baggage and ammunition), three rifle companies (Schützen-Kompanien), and a machine gun company (Maschinengewehr-Kompanie). These battalion companies were designated 1. through 12. Kompanien in sequence through the regiment with 4., 8., and 12. being the machine gun companies. Battalions were commanded by lieutenants colonel (Oberstleutnant) or majors (Major) and companies by captains (Hauptmann) or senior lieutenants (Oberleutnant). An infantry regiment was authorized about 680 horses, 210 horse-drawn wagons and carts, 73 motorized vehicles (mainly for munitions and towing antitank and infantry guns), and 47 motorcycles. As the war wore on the amount of vehicles, wagons, and horses available for issue dwindled.

The 190-man rifle companies (Schützen-Kompanie) had a company troop (Kompanie-Trupp) and Tross (combat, ration, baggage), three rifle platoons (Schützenzüge), plus an antitank rifle group (Panzerbüchsen-Gruppe), seven men with three 7.92mm PzB.39 antitank rifles. The 48-man rifle platoons had a platoon leader (Zugführer, more often a senior NCO rather than a Leutnant), an NCO troop leader (Truppführer, equivalent to a US platoon sergeant), two messengers (Melder), and a medical orderly (Sanitäter) in the platoon troop (Zug-Trupp). The platoon had a three-man light mortar troop (Granatwerfer-Trupp) with a 5cm leGrW.36 mortar intended to engage machine gun nets and small groups of infantrymen. There were initially four 10-man rifle groups (Schützengruppen) with a group leader (Gruppenführer), a corporal (Unteroffizier), troop leader (assistant group leader), machine gunner, his assistant, an ammunition man, and five riflemen. The three-man MG-34 light machine gun troop (Maschinengewehr-Trupp) operated under the group leader's control. The riflemen operated under the direct control of the troop leader as the rifle troop (Schützen-Trupp). The group leader usually had a 9mm MP-38 or 40 machine pistol, the machine gunner a 9mm P-08 Luger or P-38 Walther pistol and all others had 7.92mm Kar.98k Mauser carbines. One rifleman had a rifle grenade launcher and at least two hand grenades were carried by most men. When three-group rifle platoons began to be organized in 1940, each rifle company was provided a heavy machine gun group with two tripod-mounted heavy MG-34s in an effort to make up for some of the firepower lost when the three lost rifle groups were deleted from the company, one from each platoon. This feature too disappeared from later raised companies.

The machine gun company had a company troop, three heavy machine gun platoons (Maschinengewehrzüge), and a heavy mortar platoon (Granatwerferzug). The machine gun platoons had three groups, each of two troops with each manning a 7.92mm MG-34 tripod-mounted heavy machine gun for a total of 12. The mortar platoon had three groups, each with two troops, for six 8cm sGrW.34.

There were two additional companies directly under regimental control. The 13. Infanteriegeschütz-Kompanie (Infantry Gun Company) possessed a company troop, signal group, two light gun platoons, and a heavy gun platoon. The armament was four 7.5cm leIG.18 light infantry guns and two 15cm sIG.33 heavy infantry guns, two per platoon. These were short-ranged howitzers manned by infantrymen intended to provide immediate indirect and low-angle fire to the regiment without having to rely on divisional artillery ensuring the attack's momentum was maintained. They also provided immediately available fire support for the defense. The light gun platoons were typically attached to rifle battalions and heavy gun platoon remained under regimental control. Some regiments raised from 1940 on lacked the two heavy infantry guns. The 14. Panzerjäger-Kompanie (Antitank Company) had four platoons each with four 3.7cm PaK 35/36 antitank guns and a light machine gun troop. These platoons could be attached to rifle companies, positioned forward of the main defense line to break-up armor attacks, or placed behind the forward units to provide depth to the defense in the event of an enemy tank breakthrough. From 1940 some newly raised regiments had no regimental companies or battalion machine gun companies, but merely a heavy company (schwere Kompanie) in each battalion with four light infantry guns (two platoons) and four 3.7cm antitank guns (one platoon).

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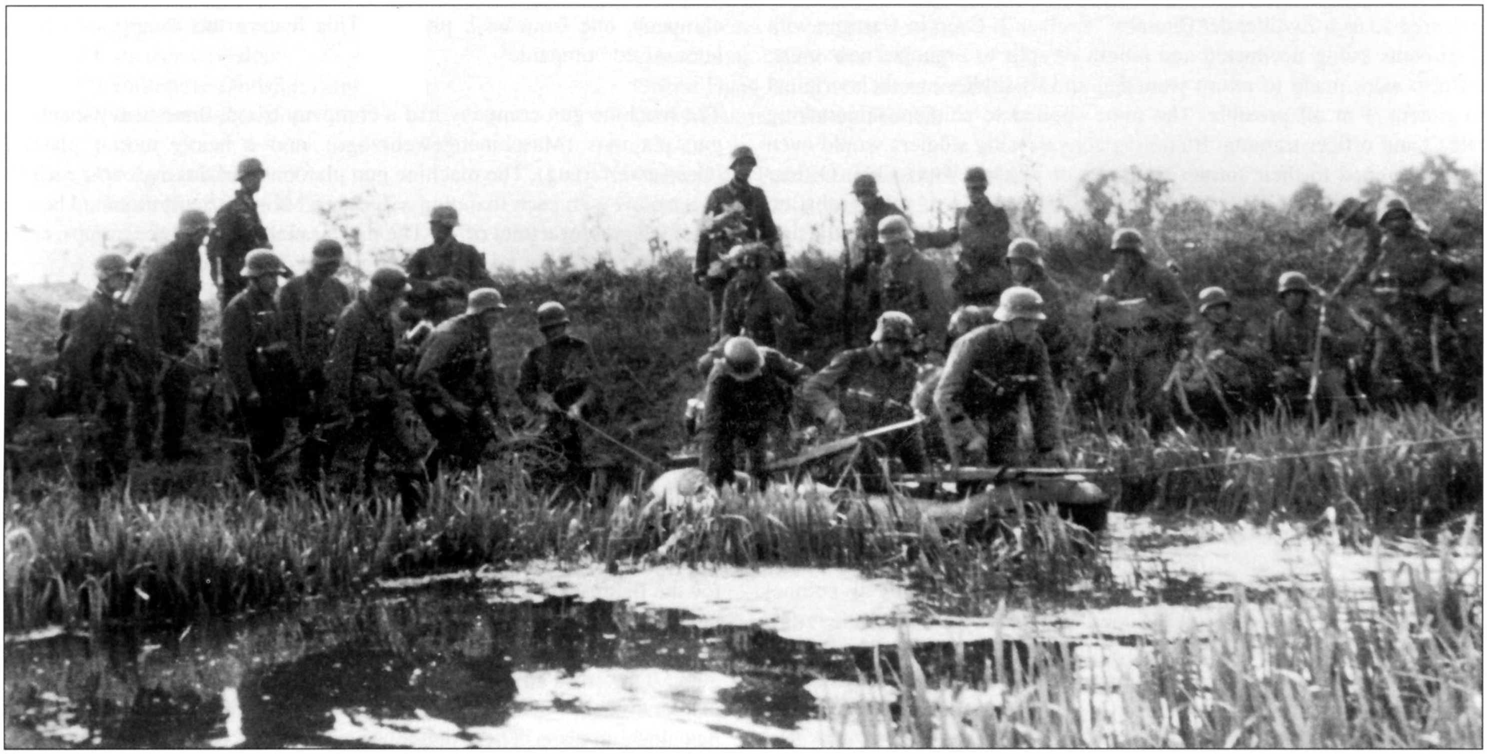
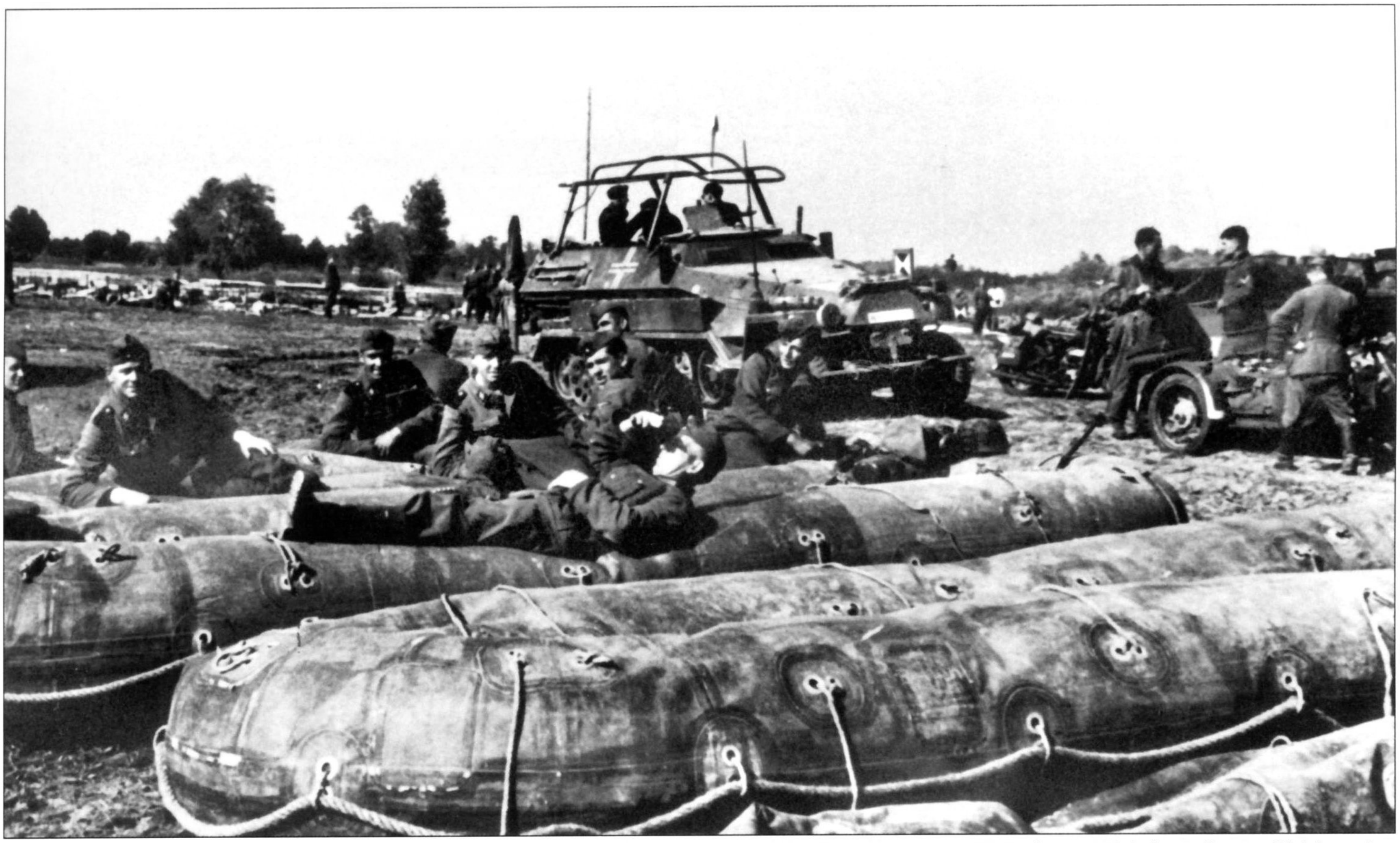
Summer Battles

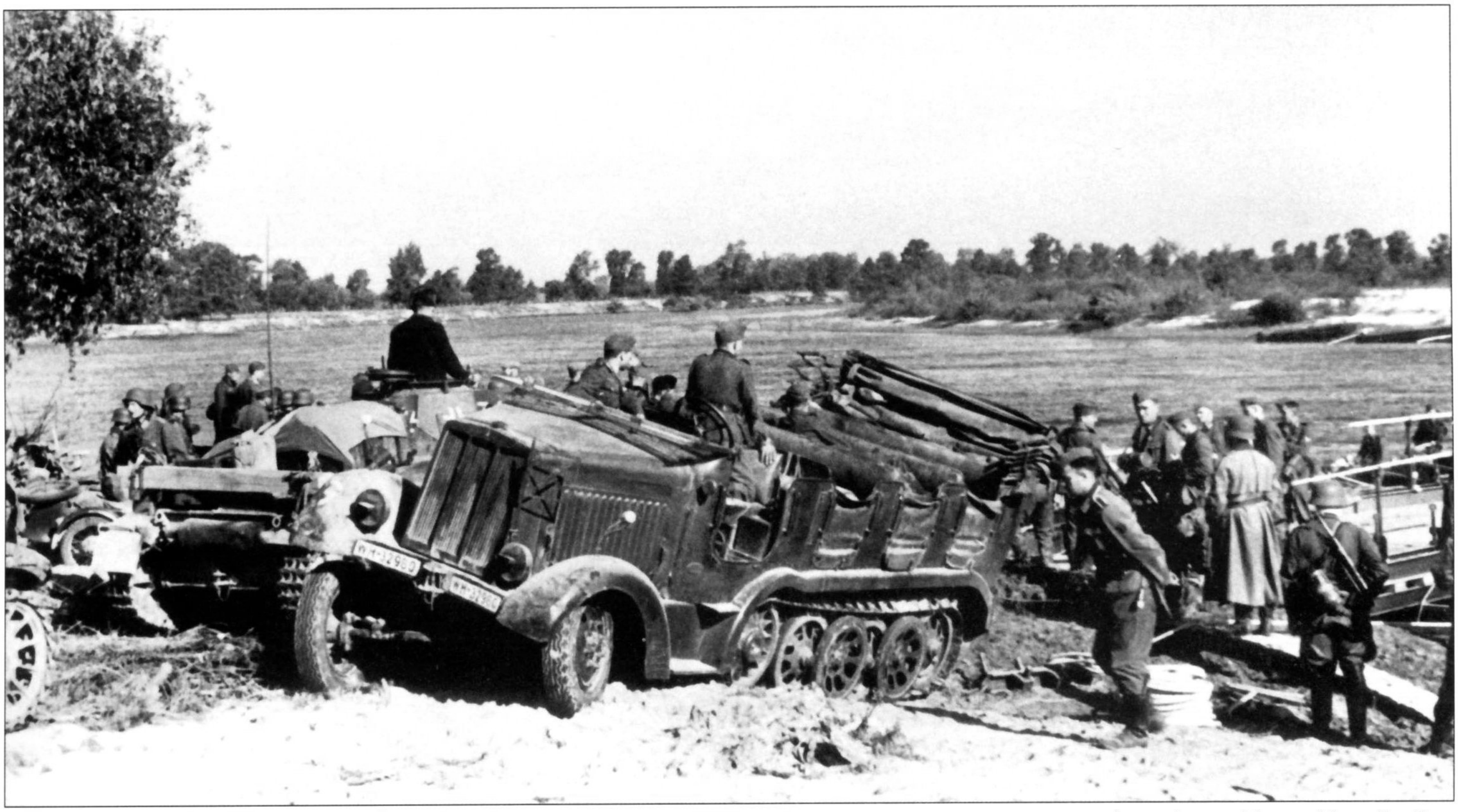
Commander of the 6.Armee, Generaloberst Friedrich von Paulus with two members of his staff during their August 1942 advance on Stalingrad. In the summer of 1942 Hitler divided Heeresgruppe Süd ordering List's Heeresgruppe A south, towards Rostov and the Caucasus, and Weich's Heeresgruppe B to drive east across the Don to the Volga—and Stalingrad. Von Paulus' 6. Armee spearheaded the eastern thrust...toward obliteration. Under his command were 23 German and Romanian divisions: 250,000 men, 500 tanks, 7,000 guns and mortars, and 25,000 horses. General von Paulus was a technically proficient officer, but he lacked decisiveness and had convinced himself that Hitler was an infallible military genius. The German soldier referred to Hitler as the Gröfaz, a contraction of Größter Feldherr aller Zeiten ("Greatest general of all time") based on a propaganda claim attributed to Generalfeldmarschall Walter Keitel.



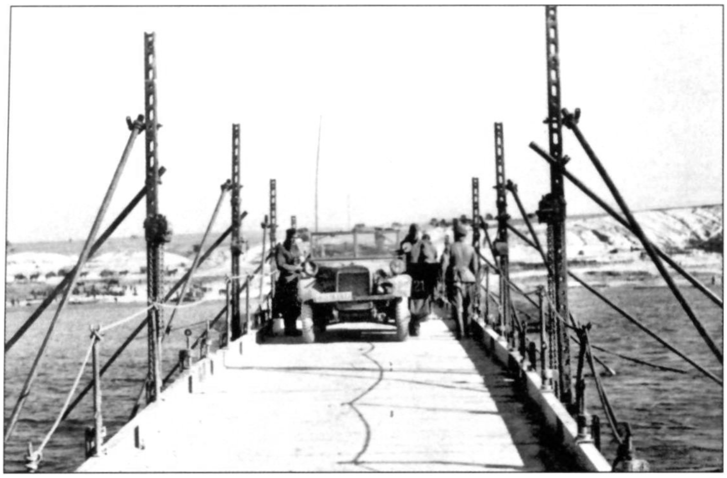
German infantrymen cross one of the numerous marshes bordering the Don River. They use 10-foot long, three-man Schlauchboote—small inflatable boats—as well as commandeered local boats. Two antitank riflemen are seen boarding one boat with their 7.92mm PzB.39 Panzerbüchse. Büchse is normally translated as "container," but it is also an old term for a firearm. A 7.92mm MG-34 machine gunner flowed by his 9mm MP-40 submachine gun-armed group (squad) leader and an assistant gunner debark another boat.

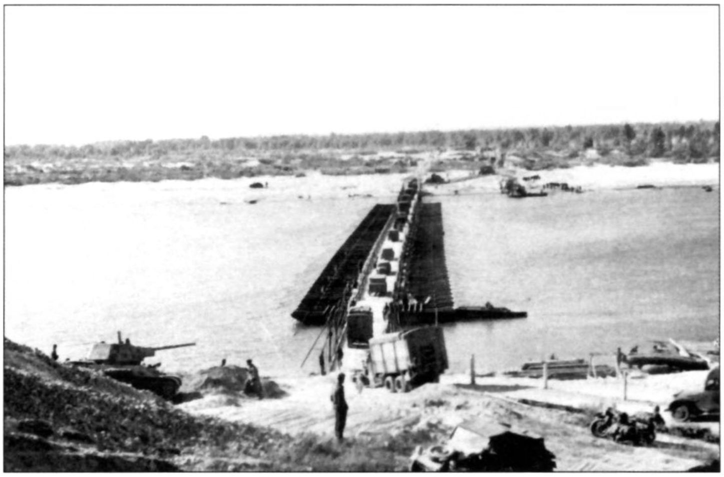


At midday on 22 August 6. Armee pioneers completed the pontoon bridges across the Don River. Here pioneers of General Hube's 16. Panzer-Division relax atop spare medium pneumatic boats taking a Feuerpause (firebreak), the formal term for "cease-fire," a cigarette break or a short rest break. These boats had a 6-foot beam and 18-foot length, and could carry seven men, but were extensively used to construct rafts using one to three pairs of boats. Pioniertruppen were highly trained specialists most likely to be found on the front spearheading assaults by crossing rivers and streams, breeching obstacles and minefields, and assaulting fortifications. They fought side-by-side with infantrymen. Pioneers were armed with flamethrowers, demolitions, mines, smoke generating equipment, mine detectors, and other specialist gear. The Brückenpionere were bridge construction units and possessed pneumatic boats and pontoon equipment for bridges and ferries. Each division had two bridge columns. In the background is an Sd.Kfz.251/3 halftrack Funkwagen (radio vehicle) bearing a Panzergruppe command pennant.

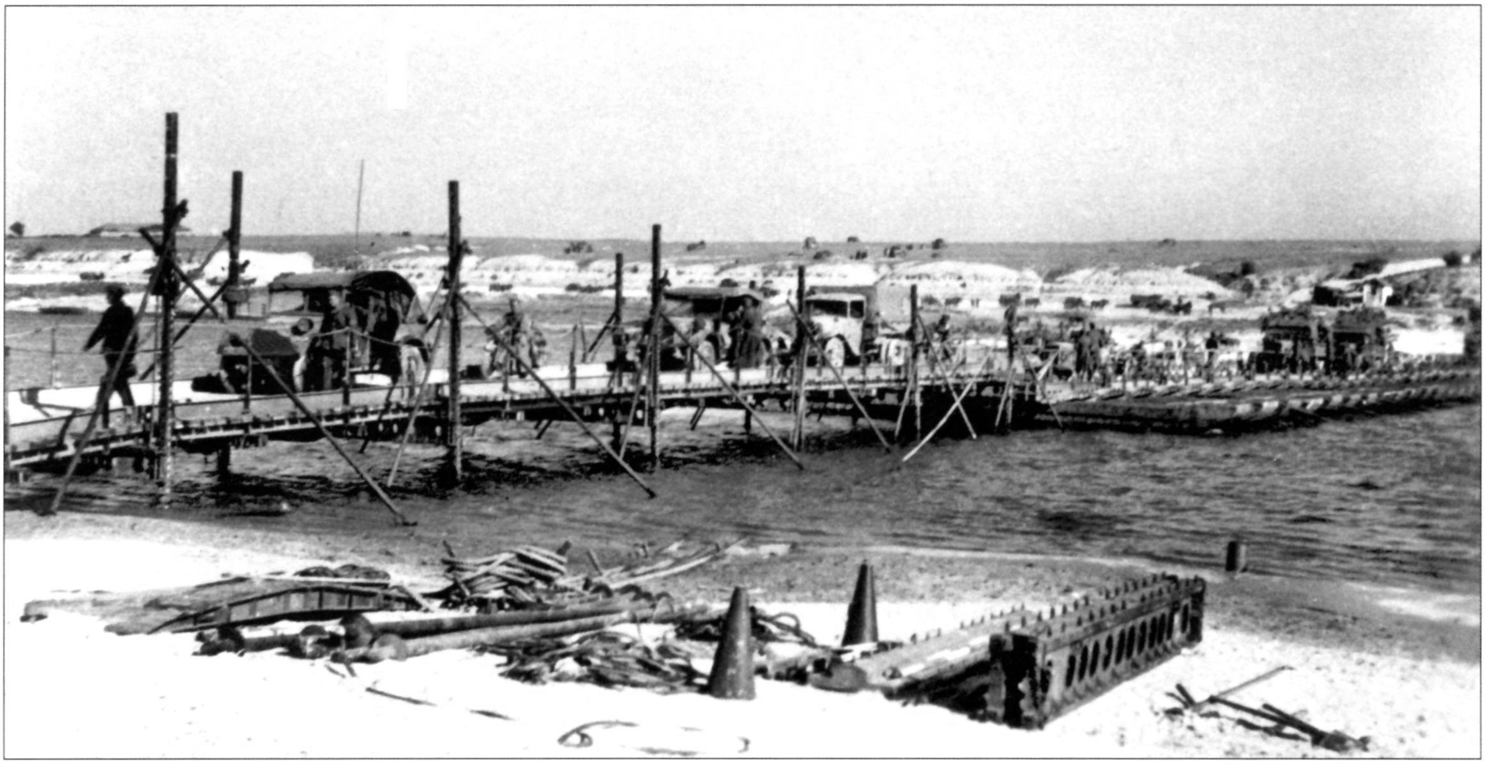


Early the following morning on 23 August a battalion of 2. Panzer-Regiment, reinforced with Panzergrenadier companies, advanced forward from the Don River towards the Volga. Here a 12-ton Sd.Kfz.8 halftrack has crossed the Don over a pontoon and trestle bridge.

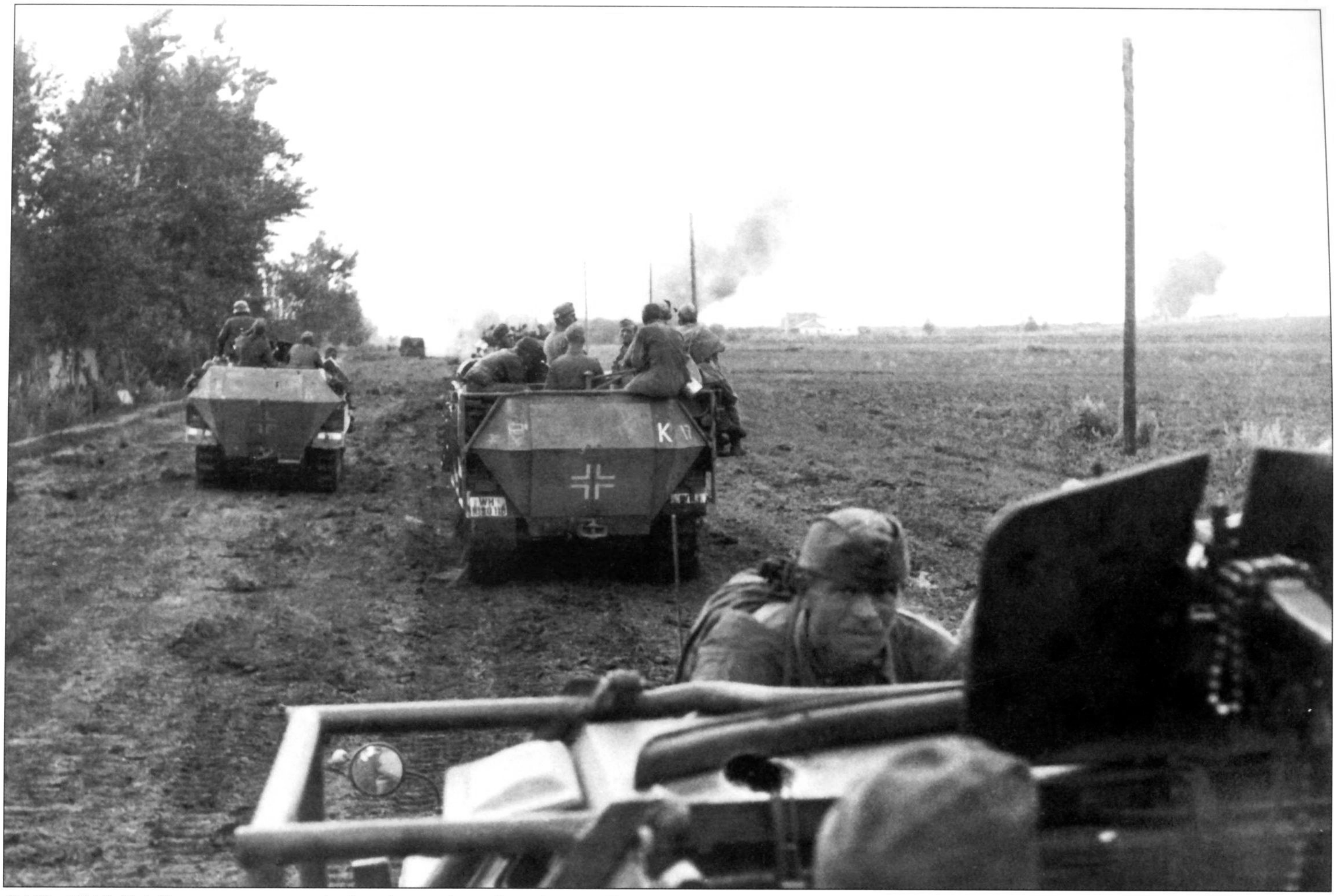




A rare opportunity to see vehicles crossing the Don during the 2. Panzer-Division's advance on the Volga in late August. These three photographs taken in sequence show the type of construction which was built by the divisional Pionier-Bataillon. A number of cross-country Horch cars can be seen crossing along with Opel "Blitz" trucks, halftrack personnel carriers, and other vehicles. In one of the photographs a captured Soviet T-34 tank can be seen to the left of the bridge's access. A white Balkenkreuz has been painted on the turret's side.

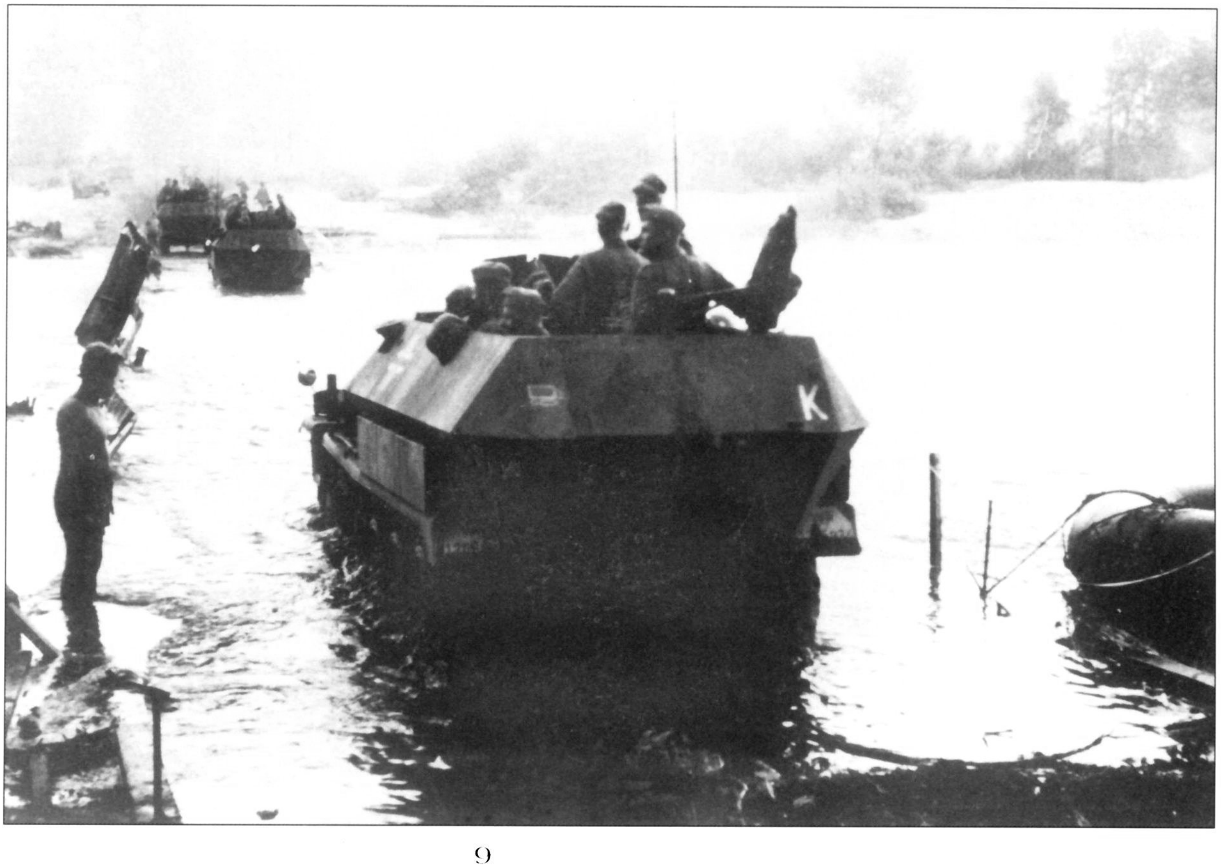


Infantry from the west bank of the Don watch a raft ferry across 10.5cm leFH.18 light field howitzers. Within days these guns would be employed against Soviet artillery positions and vessels on the Volga. Pontoons were used to construct rafts just as much as there were for floating bridges.

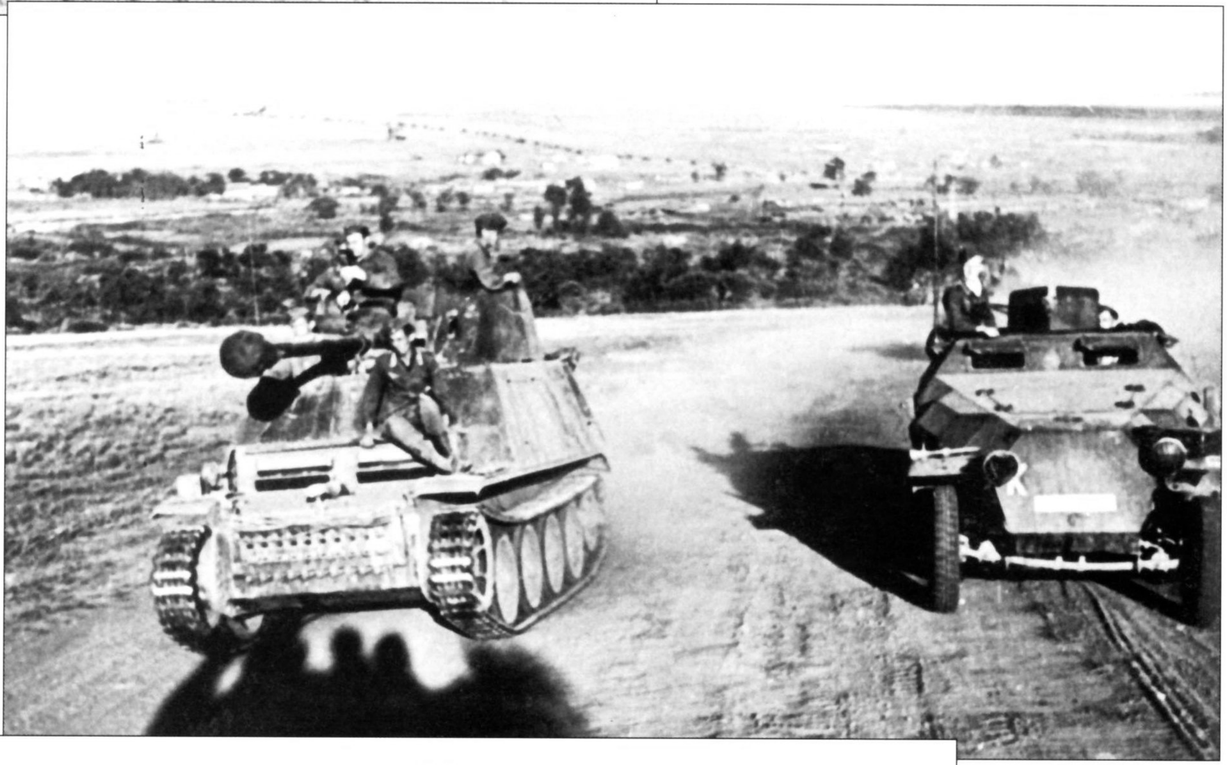


Sd.Kfz.251/1 Schützenpanzerwagen halftracks continue the advance. Each Panzergrenadier Gruppe (group—squad) was carried in a halftrack. At this time though a Panzer-Division possessed one Panzergrenadier-Regiment of two battalions, of which only one was equipped with halftracks. The other battalion was transported by light cross-country trucks such as the Krupp-Protze. An Sd.Kfz.251/1 mounted a 7.92mm MG-34 machine gun over the driver's cab. A second mount, without a shield, was fitted in the troop compartment's rear for the group's dismount machine gun. The mount can be seen in the center halftrack, but the group has not mounted it probably expecting to have to soon dismount.

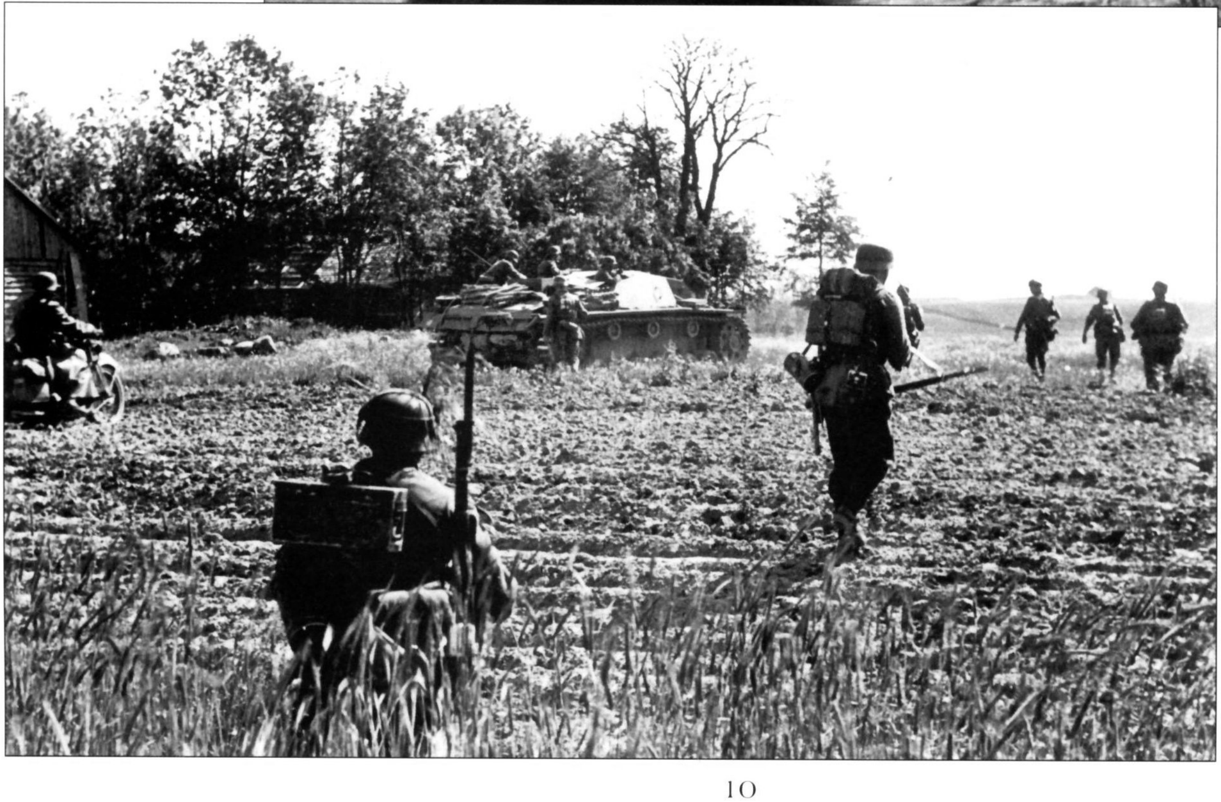
Sd.Kfz.251/1 Schützenpanzerwagen halftracks of Panzergruppe Kleist advance on Stalingrad. These halftracks are probably from the Panzergruppe's 1. Panzer-Division. The white "K" on the rear of the halftrack denotes that it is attached to Panzergruppe Kleist. On the halftrack's left rear is the white tactical symbol of a Panzergrenadier company. Prior to the advance on Stalingrad, Hitler had told Kleist that his Panzergruppen were to be the instrument whereby Germany would be assured of its oil supplies in the Caucasus. At the start of Stalingrad Campaign it was no more than a name on a map to the men of Panzergruppe Kleist.



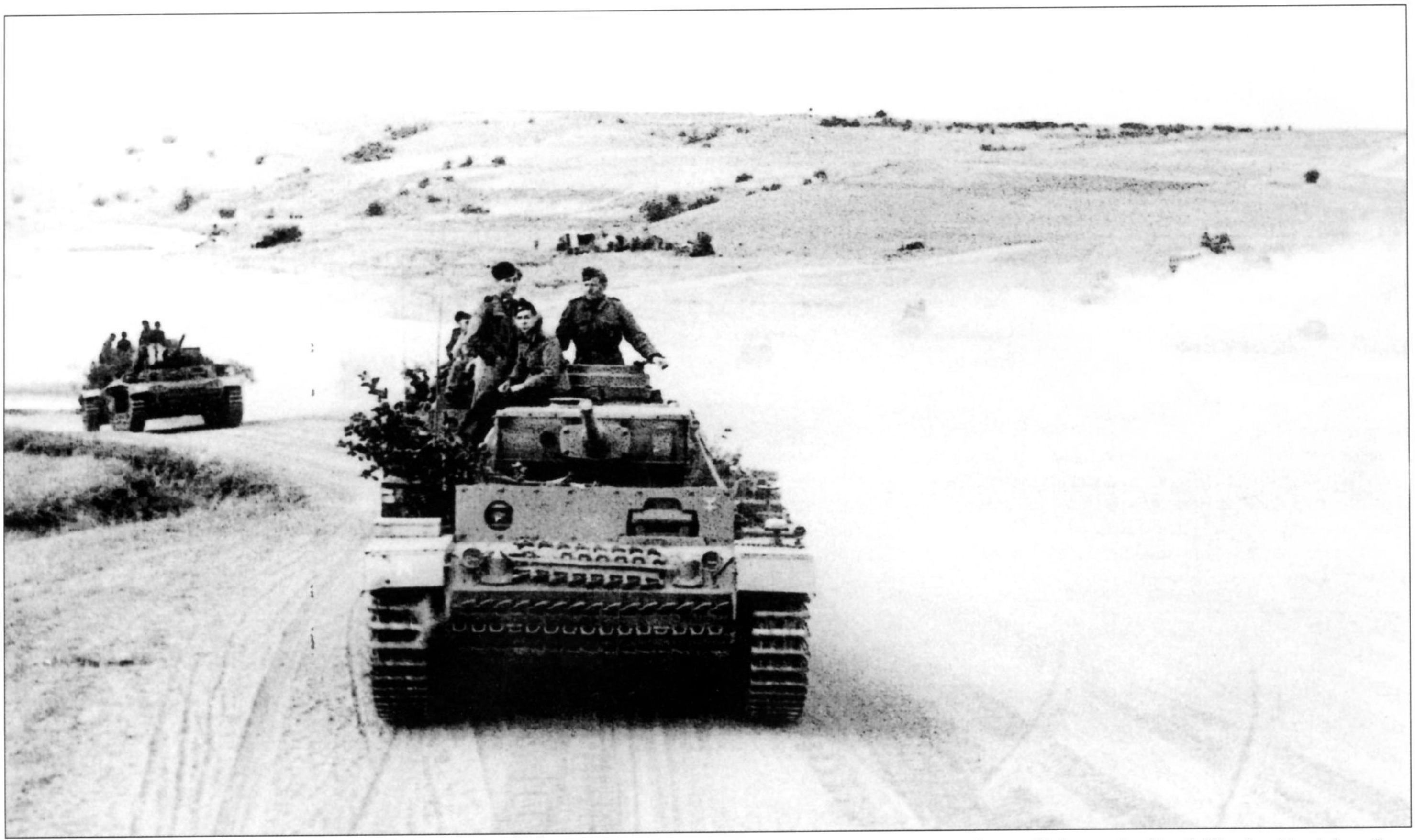
Landser of the 2. Panzer-Division move forward from the Don across the hot, dry flat steppes. The steppes were covered by endless wheat fields. The lack of terrain features made land navigation difficult and units often did not know precisely where they were located.



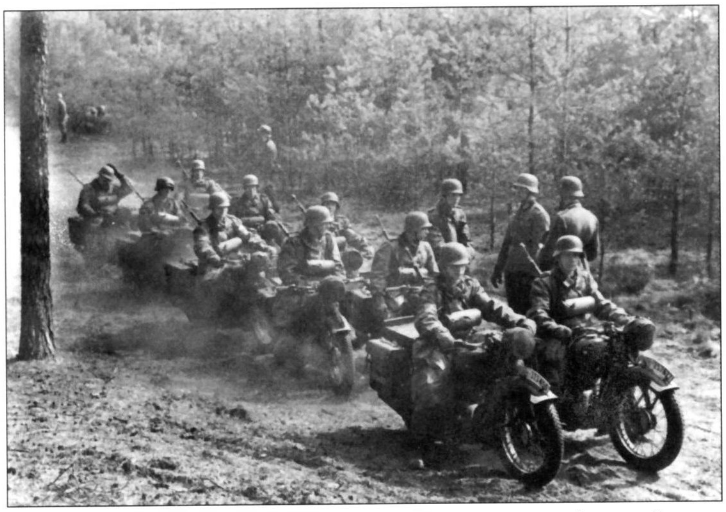
A Marder II self-propelled antitank gun, or Panzer Selbstfahrlafette 1 für 7.62cm PaK.36(r) auf Fahrgestell (Sd.Kfz.132) passes an Sd.Kfz.251/1 halftrack. Both of these lightly armored and open-topped vehicles would prove to be vulnerable in Stalingrad street fighting.



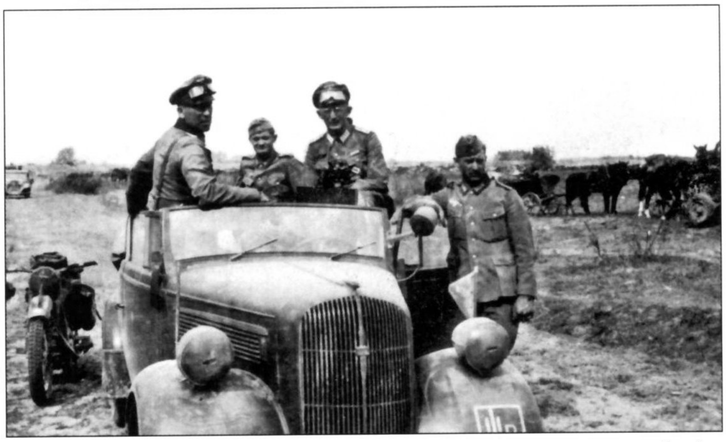
For the first several kilometers after crossing the Don Panzer crews and infantrymen saw few enemy. Here Landser follow a StuG III assault gun. This vehicle was armed with a 7.5cm gun. The Landser nicknamed it the "Stug," derived from its StuG abbreviation for Sturmgeschütz. The Landser in the foreground has an aluminum machine gun cartridge case (Patronenkasten 41) with either six 50-round belts or a 300-round belt of 7.92mm ammunition. The standing man carries a metal container on his back holding ten rounds for the 5cm leGrW.36 light mortar.



A column of Pz.Kpfw. IIIs from Panzergruppe Kleist advance towards the Volga during August, Drang nach Osten (Drive to the East). The lead tank is a 5cm gun-armed Pz.Kpfw. III Ausf. N with add-on 30mm armor bolted to the front of the driver's compartment. This additional armor was a lesson learned from North Africa. These tanks were also provided with thin spaced armor on the front, but the obvious bolts indicate the thicker add-on armor.



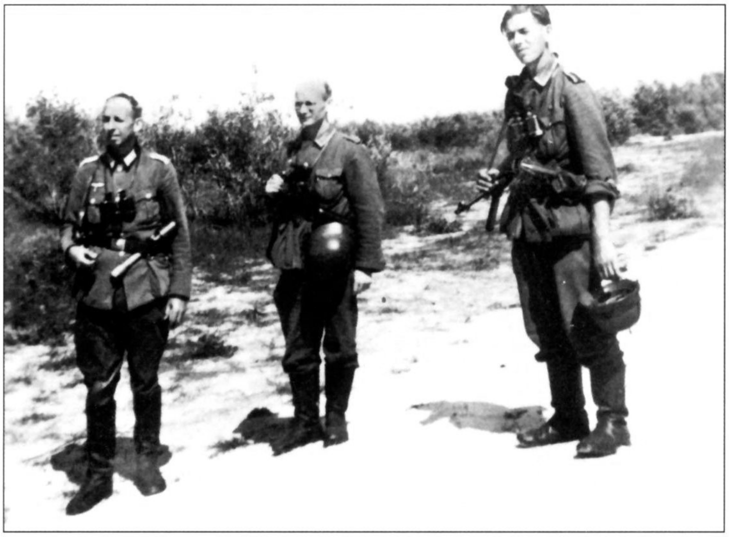
A motorcycle group pauses during the advance. A Kradschützen-Gruppe was organized essentially the same as a foot Schützen-Gruppe. Landser called motorcycles simply a Krad, contraction for Kraftrad. These Kradschützen wear the Kradmantel, contraction for Schutzmantel für Kraftradfahrer (protective suit for motorcyclists), a one-piece rubberized waterproof and windproof suit. Rather than wear their gasmask carriers on their back as dismounted troops, they wear them on their chests. These appear to be Zündapps, but many makes were employed to include BMW, NSU, DKW, Triumph, and Victoria.



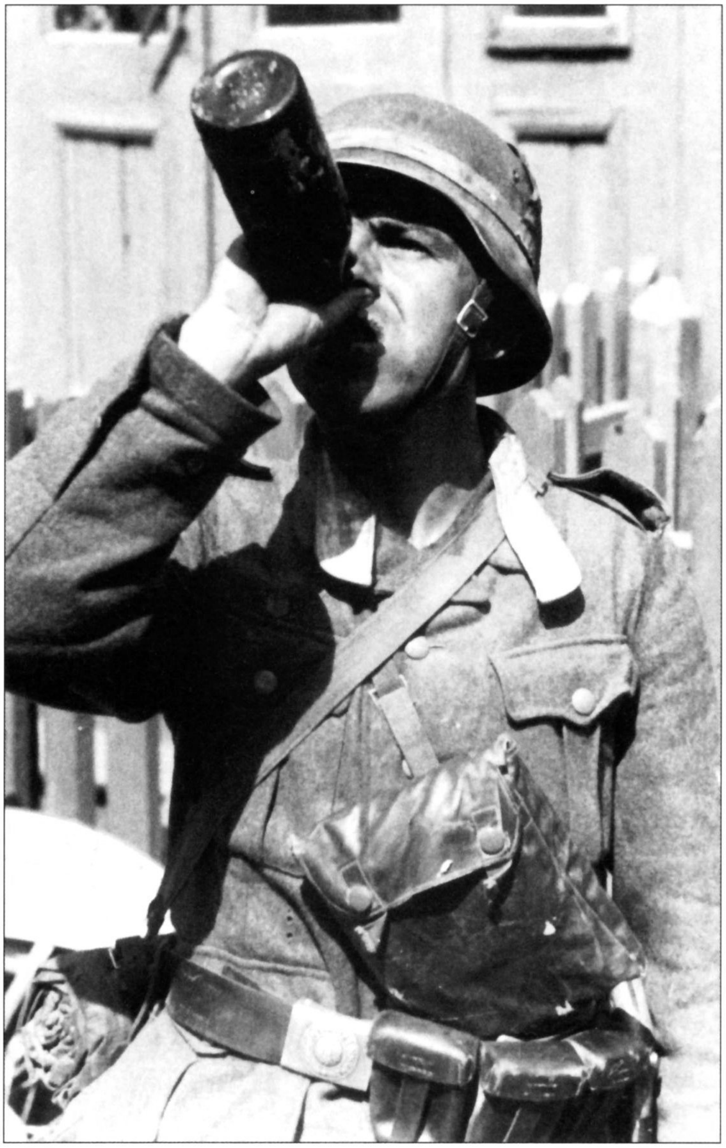
A staff car belonging to 2. Panzer-Division has halted near the Volga. On the front left mudguard the vehicle displays tactical symbols for an artillery unit. Note the slotted blackout light covers.

During the last few kilometers before the Volga is reached soldiers of 16. Panzer-Division were unexpectedly barraged by artillery batteries crewed by young girls. The Soviets fielded few female combat units and this instance demonstrated their desperation. Over the distant ridge lays the Volga. In the undergrowth soldiers can be seen peering through their binoculars trying to determine the locations of Soviet positions. Officially binoculars were called a Doppelfernrohr or Fernglass, but the Landser called it a Dienstglass (service glass).

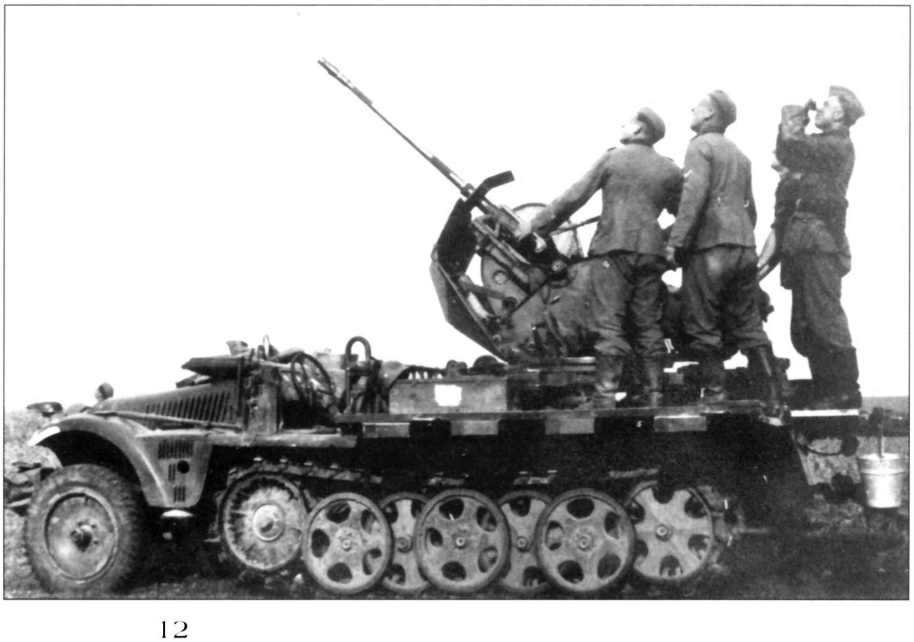
Landser of 267. Infanterie-Regiment of 94. Infanterie-Division use a deserted Russian farmstead as a command post not far from the Volga. The Landser adopted the Russian name for log cabins, Isba. From here soldiers watched Luftwaffe bombing raids on Stalingrad and could see the black smoke from the factories rise thousands of meters into the warm southern Russian sky.



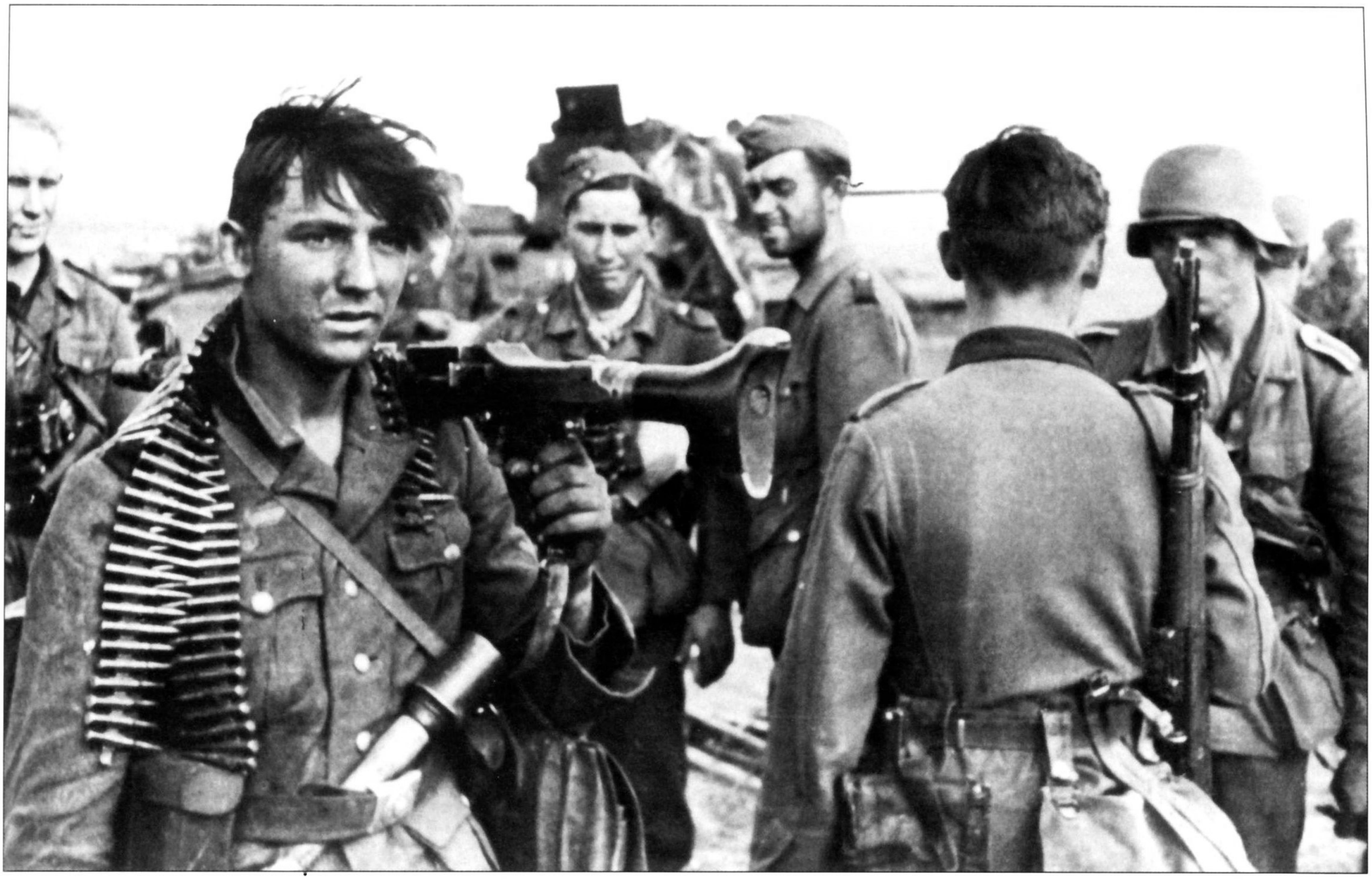
An officer, probably a Kompaniechef (company chief) and two NCOs stand on a road leading to the Volga on 24 August. All three are armed with the 9mm MP-40 submachine gun. The officer has a Stg.24 stick hand grenade pushed through his enlistedman's belt. Officer's Leibriemen (belt) Officer's had a rectangular open-faced buckle and the belt itself was reddish brown; enlisted men's were black. The NCO to the right is an Unteroffizier (corporal) while the one in the center wears his rank shoulder straps upside-down as a means of camouflage.



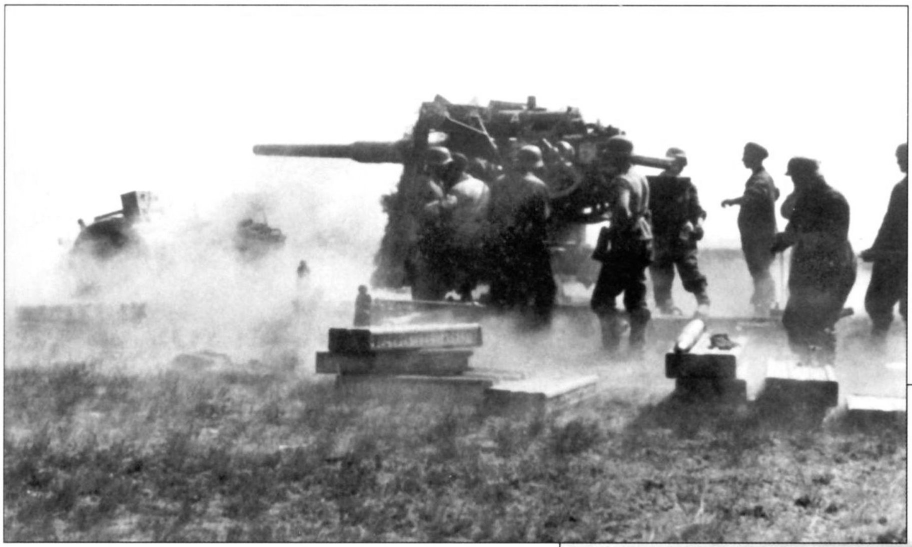
A Gefreiter (private first class) from 94. Infanterie-Division takes a much needed respite and pauses for some apple juice refreshment. The late August heat was oppressive, demonstrated by the open collar of his wool uniform, but soon the weather would change as the autumn rains took a grip along the banks of the Volga. Rear service troops were issued only one 30-round Patronentasche 11 (cartridge pouch) rather than two as Frontsoldat. He wears a Gasplane (anti-gas sheet) in a dark bluish green rubberized fabric pouch on his gas mask carrier's strap.



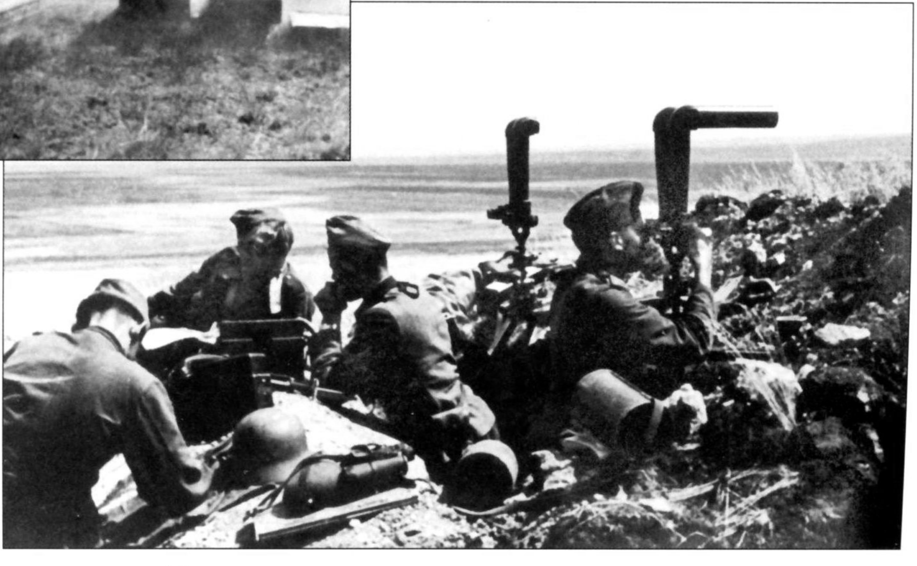
Einsatzbereit (ready for action), a 1-ton Sd.Kfz.10/4 halftrack carrier armed with a 2cm FlaK 30 stands by to fire on Soviet aircraft near the Volga. This weapon was being replaced by the improved FlaK 38, but the FlaK 30 remained in use through the war. The weapons were fed by 20-round magazines. Besides air defense their high explosive and armor-piercing rounds were effective against light armored and soft-skin vehicles, field fortifications, fortified buildings, and personnel.



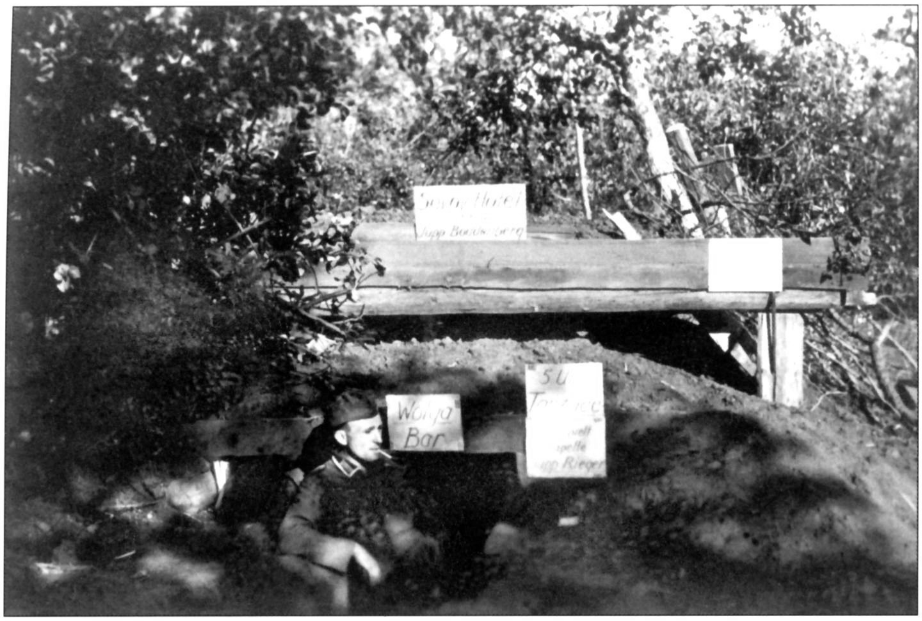
Panzergreandiere of 16. Panzer-Division arrive on the banks of the Volga. A Maschinengewehrschütze (machine gunner) carries his 7.92mm MG-34 over his shoulder and his Ersatzstücketasche 34 (replacement parts pouch) on his right front belt. He is also armed with a Stg.24 stick hand grenade. Machine gunners were known simply as an Abzug (trigger), as in triggerman.



An 8.8cm FlaK 18 antiaircraft gun of 16. Panzer-Division announced its first evening on the banks of the Volga by shelling a railway ferry and gunboat and sinking a steamer. Over the next few days they continued firing on boats and while Soviet artillery counterbattery-fired on them. The Lansder knew the 8.8cm as the "Acht-Acht"—Eight-eight. Note the field gray metal ammunition cases in the foreground. Unpainted wicker containers of the same size and shape were introduced later.

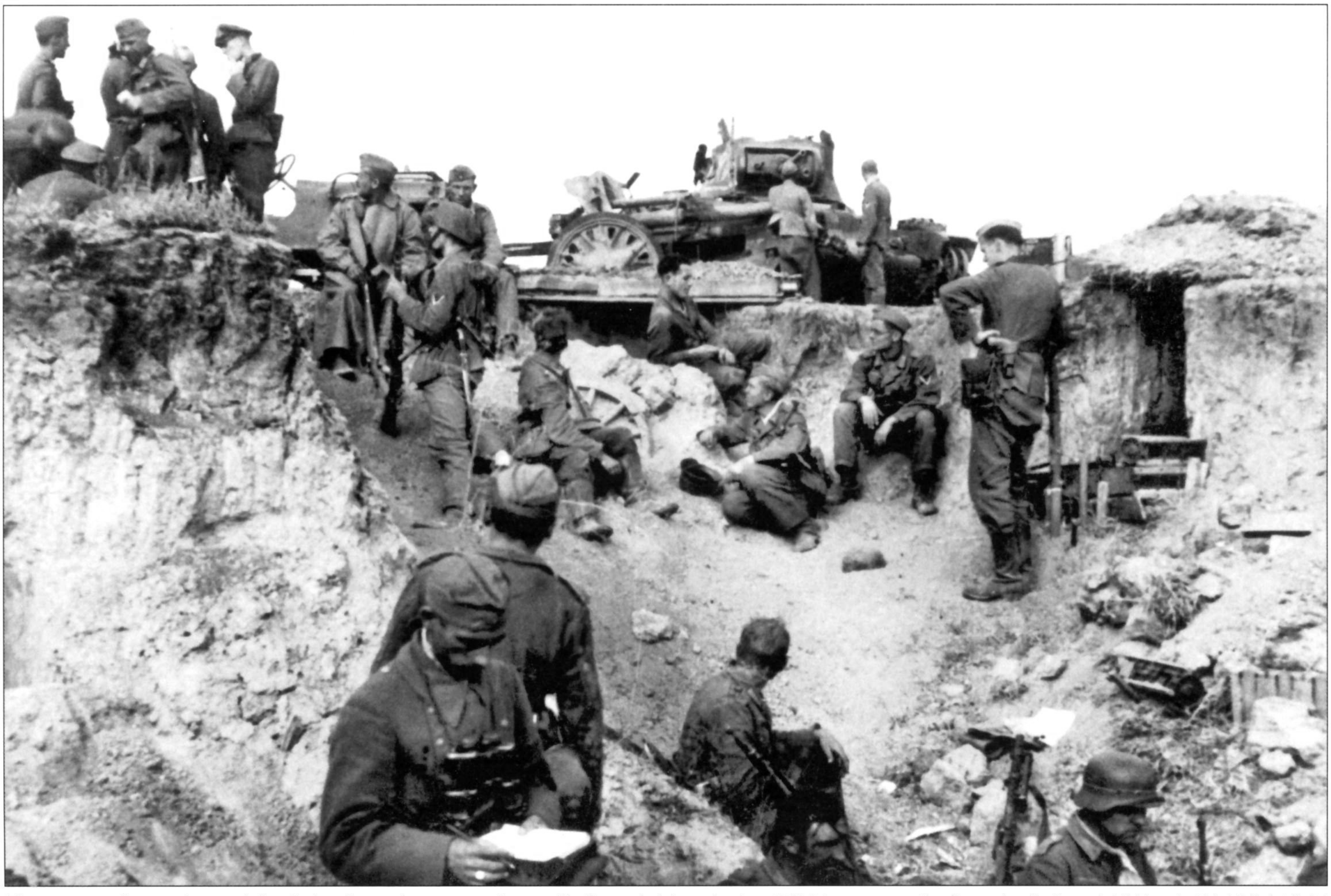


Artillery forward observers attempt to locate Soviet positions along the east bank of the Volga using 6x30 Sf.14Z Scherenfernrohr (scissors periscope). The long detachable tubes on the right periscope are intended to eliminate glare reflection, but also limited the field of vision. Forward observers were assigned to artillery batteries and established observation posts among frontline infantry units. Communications between observation posts and the firing battery was usually by field telephone. A telephone operator, often called a Strippenzieher (line-plugger), talks on a Feldfernsprecher 33 field telephone.

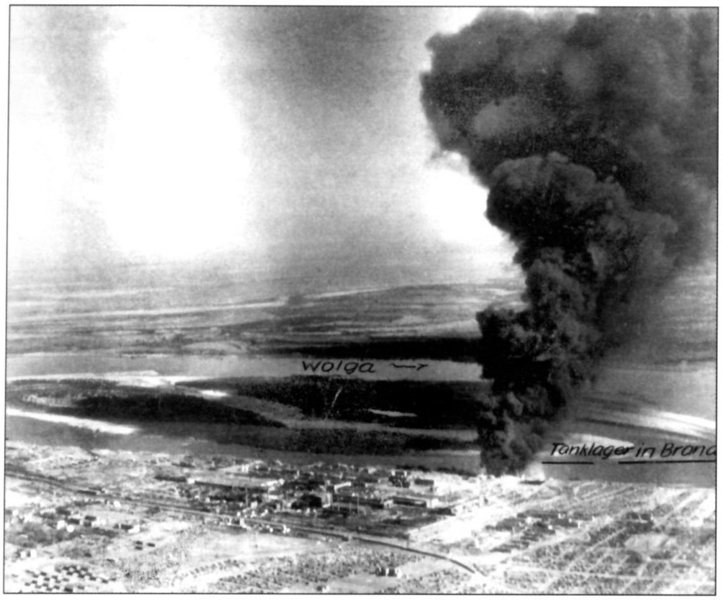


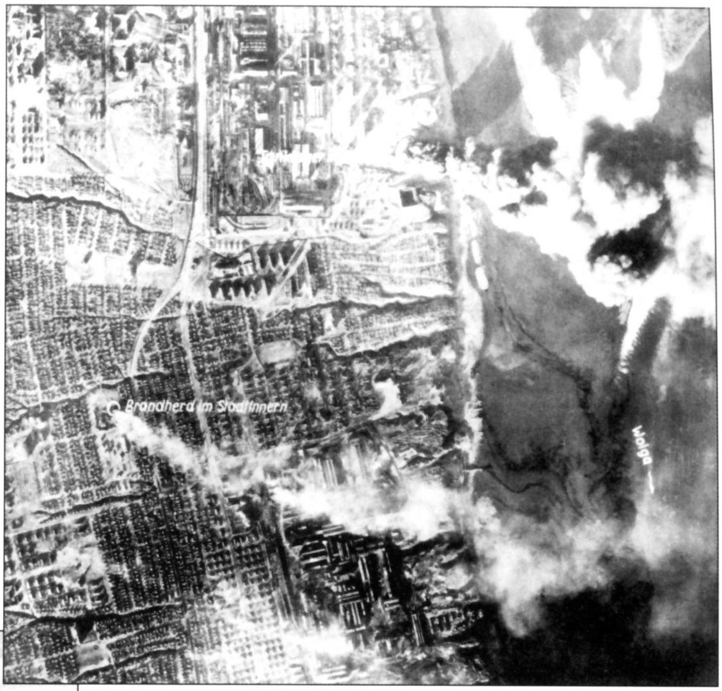
A Landser, the "proprietor," of the "Savoy Hotel" had posted a sign announcing that the "Wolga Bar" offers a teatime dance at 5. Such Gruppen- and Halbgruppenunterstände (group and half-group living bunkers) were called Kleine Häuser (small houses) by the Landser. They were essential to survive the ceaseless artillery and later the below freezing weather.

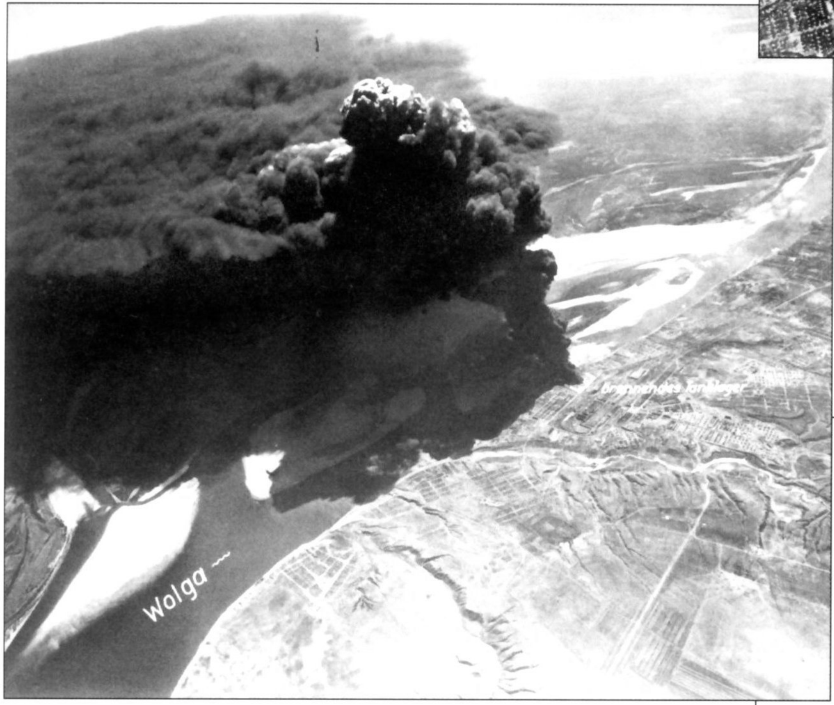
An officer is speaking on the telephone next to his Sd.Kfz.251/6 Ausf. B Befehlswagen (command vehicle) of 16. Panzer-Division in the Kuzmichi area. By the 24 August the 16. Panzer-Division's position was perilous because the Soviets were holding the approaches to the northern part of the city and bringing reinforced by troops funneled in from Voronezh to the north.



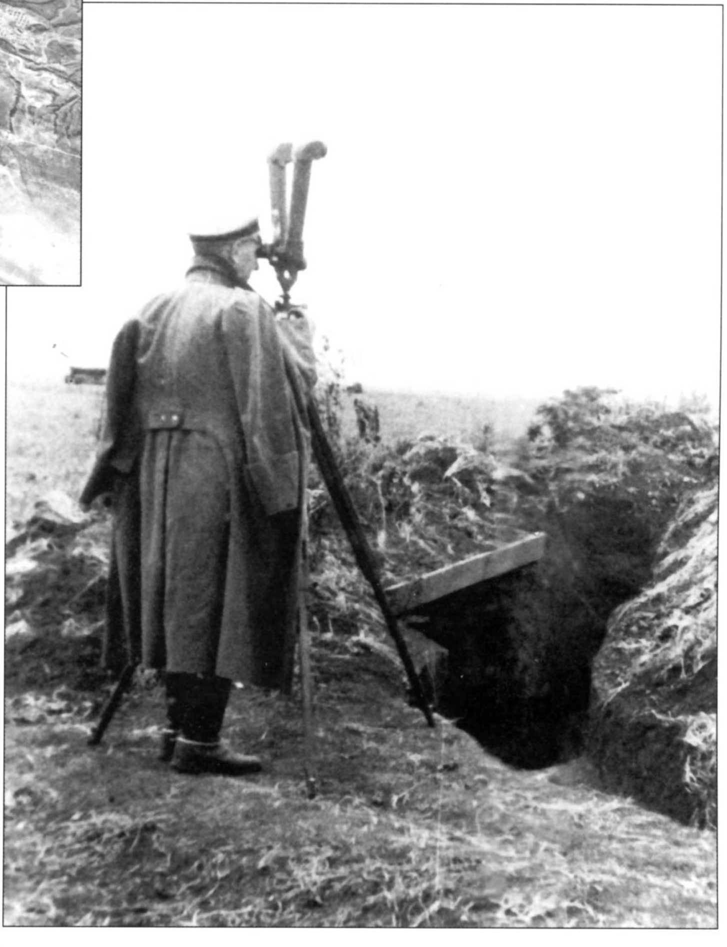
These troops have taken a defended gully on the approaches to Stalingrad. A knocked out T-34 is seen on the lip and a limbered 10.5cm leFH.18 light field howitzer passes on its way forward. This was the standard divisional field piece and not the 8.8cm FlaK as is often portrayed in movies, novels, and memoirs.



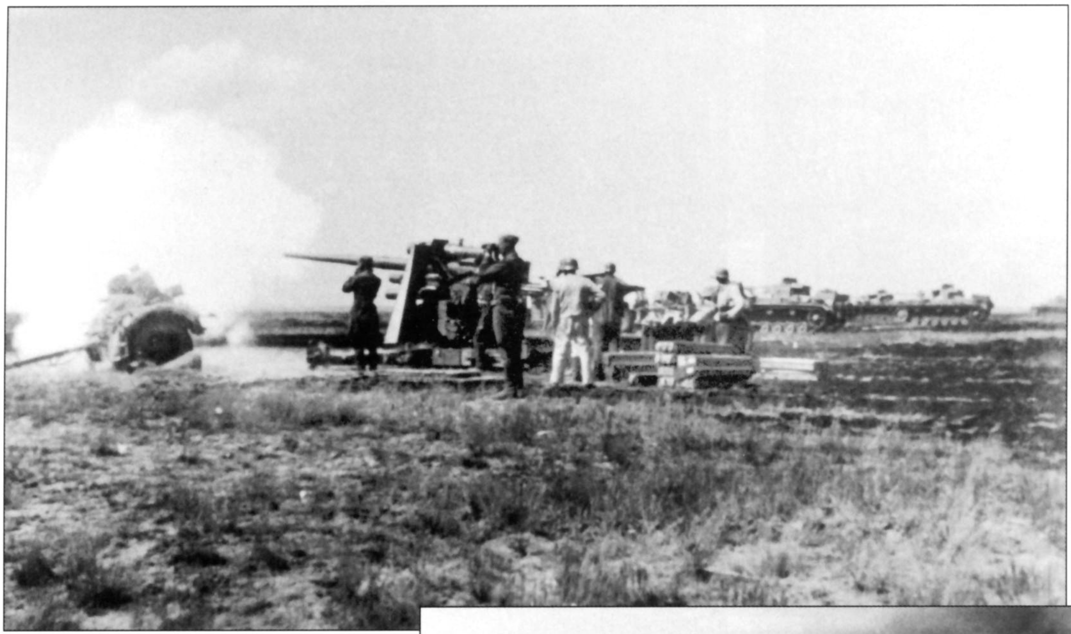




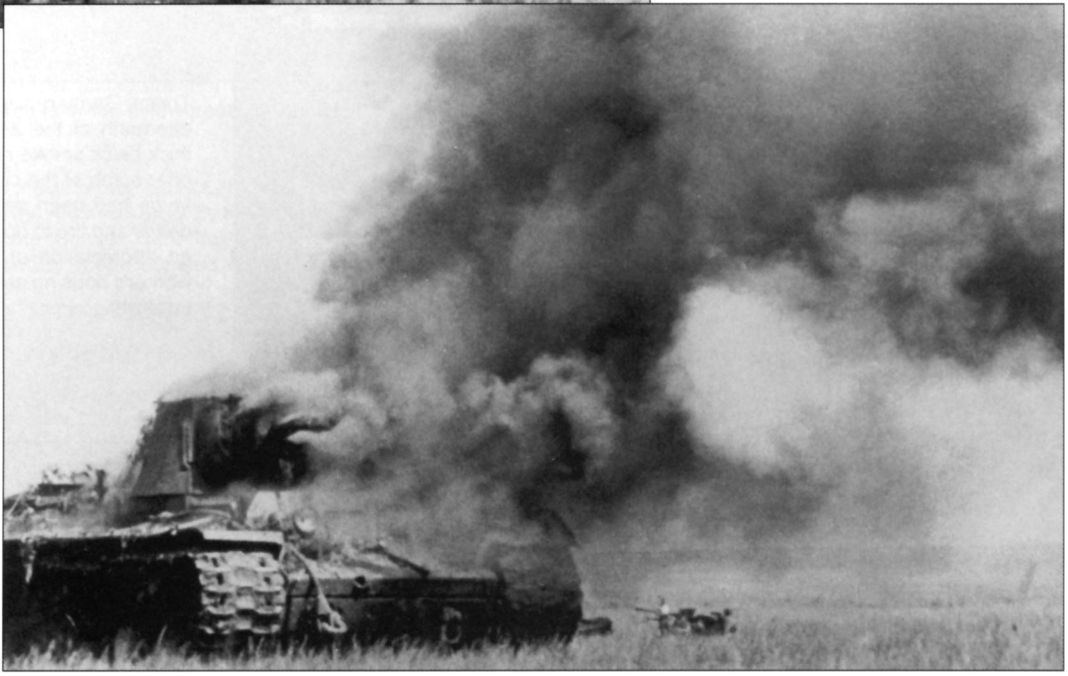
These German aerial reconnaissance photographs show the aftermath of the 24 August Luftwaffe raid on Stalingrad. The thick black smoke rises thousands of meters into the clear sky after some of the city's oil storage tank yard (Tanklager) on the Volga had been set aflame. The explosions scattered burning debris and fire to docks and jetties. These photographs also give an appreciation of the city's size; the extent of the outlying worker's housing areas, and the many gullies and ravines on the outskirts.



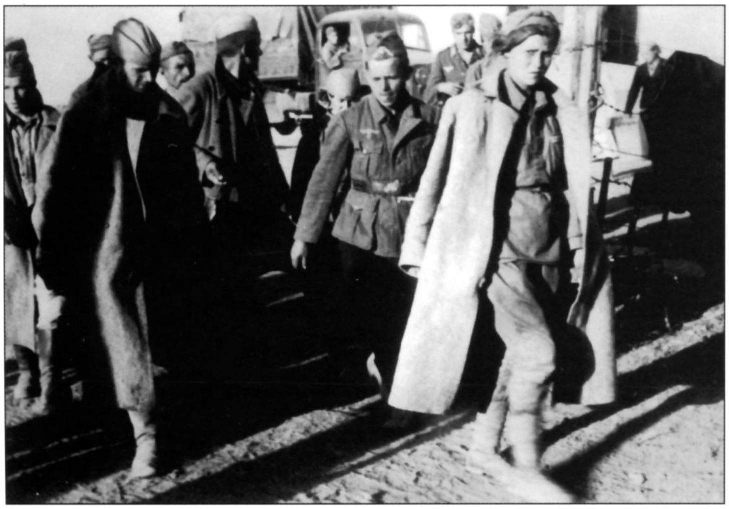
An officer of 16. Panzer-Division on 24 August observes enemy positions through a scissors periscope beside a Panzerdeckungslöcher (armor protective trench) with a Unterschlupfe (dugout shelter). Landser referred to such trenches as a Panzergrab (armor grave). During the day the Division's Gruppe Drumpen launched an attack against Spartakovka, Stalingrad's northern most industrial suburb.

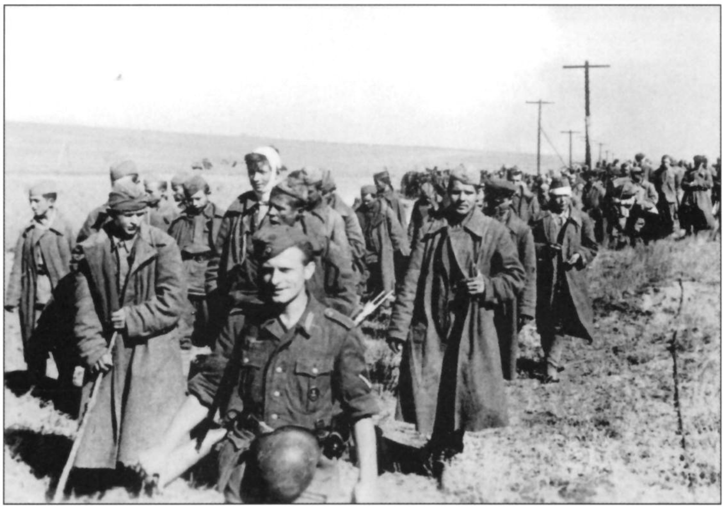


The dawn 24 August attack on Spartakovka by Gruppe Drumpen was preceded by direct fire from 8.8cm guns and a heavy bombardment by Ju 87B bombers. Lines of Pz.Kpfw. IIIs are poised to go into attack once the fire is lifted.



During the Battle for Spartakovka a Soviet KV-1 heavy tank burns after a direct hit from antitank fire. Although 16. Panzer-Division scored a number of successes, they had run into a solid defense in the northern outskirts of the city. Some of the counterattacking Soviet tanks had penetrated German lines as far as the command post of the 64. Panzergrenadier-Regiment.

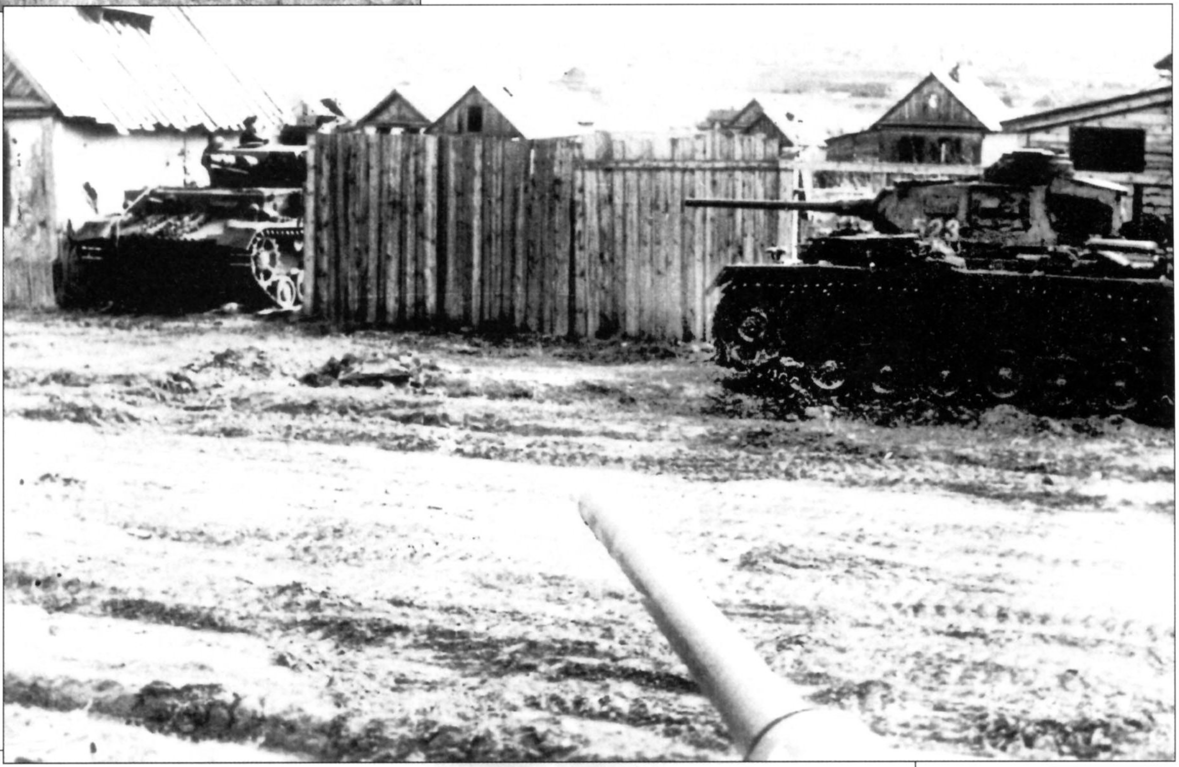


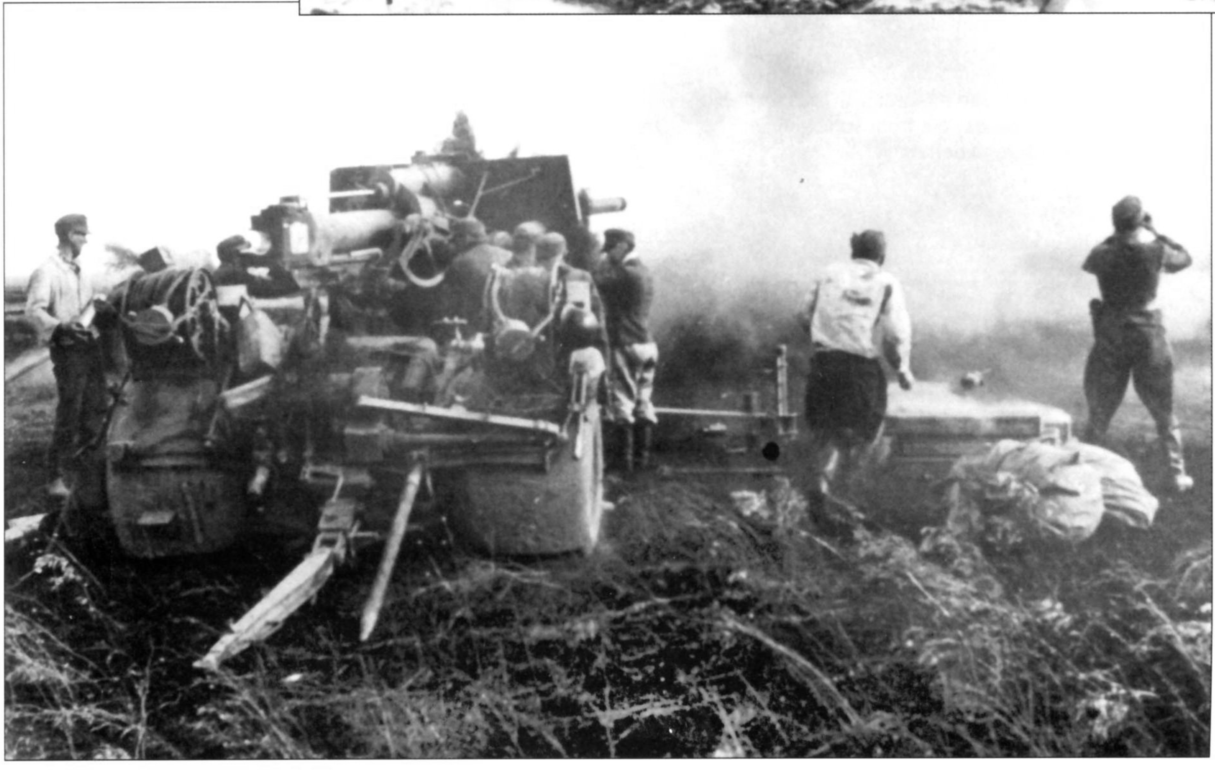


To the German soldiers arriving along the banks of the Volga it seemed that victory was beckoning. In these two photographs thousands of Soviet soldiers have been encircled, captured, and marched to hastily erected POW camps, mere barbed wire enclosures without any form of shelter or sanitary facilities. Little food and water was provided. The fate of these Red soldiers was sealed. Virtually all of them would be worked or starved to death if not outright executed. The female prisoner was a rarity. Contrary to popular myth there were no infantry units comprised of woman. Women served as signalers, medics, traffic controllers, administrative assistants. A small number served as snipers, a few ad hoc artillery units were formed, and some individuals served in tank units.

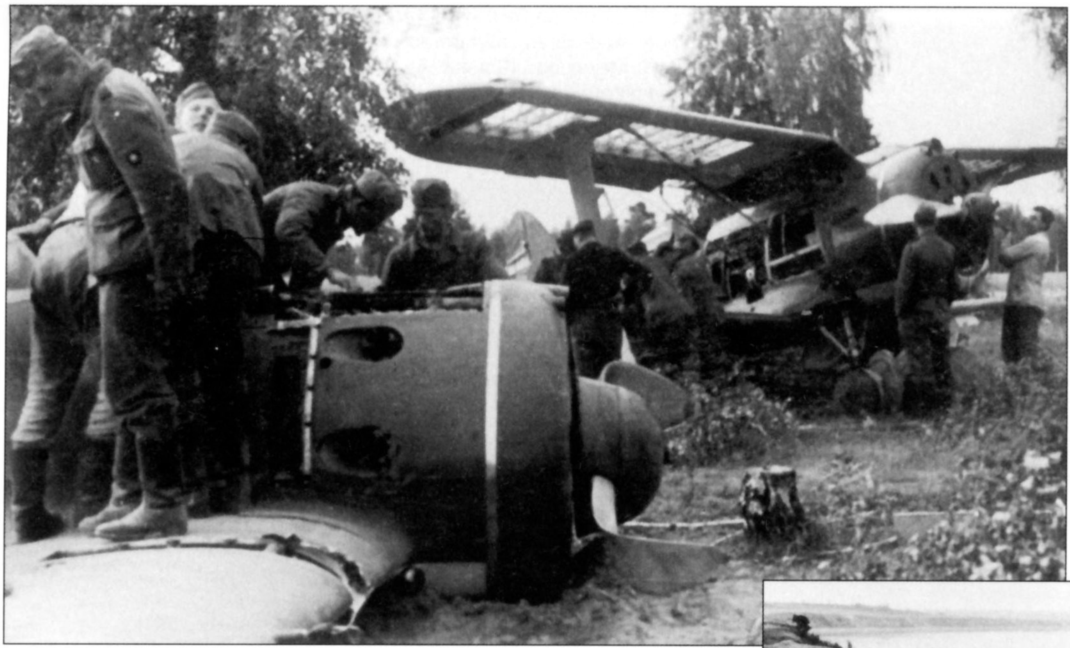
These Panzergrenadiere have reached the bluffs above the Volga. Their advance had been hampered by stiff resistance in the towns of Krasnoyarmeysk and Kuporsnoye where Red Army troops had dug in and fought a bitter and protracted battle of attrition. Panzergrenadiere had to be prepared to fight dismounted and distant from their vehicles just as other infantrymen.

Two Panzer inside a village on the outskirts of Stalingrad. The tank on the right with the tactical marking "523" is a Pz.Kpfw. III Ausf. J with a 5cm gun and on the left using a house as cover is a Pz.Kpfw. IV with a short 7.5cm gun, known as a Stumpf (Stumpy). Many tanks were stalled inside towns and villages that surrounded the Stalingrad. Soviet soldiers sniped at them with rifles and machine guns killing exposed crewmen and accompanying Panzergrenadiere and picked them off with 14.5mm antitank rifles, antitank hand grenades, hand-delivered demolition charges, captured German magnetic antitank hand mines, and Molotov cocktails.

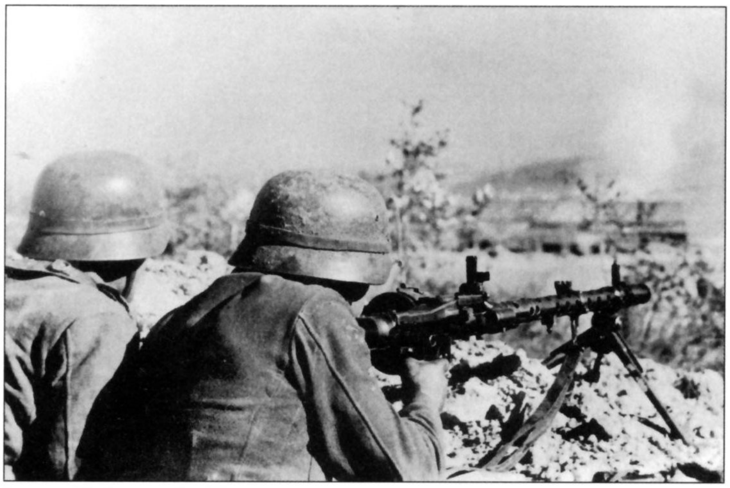




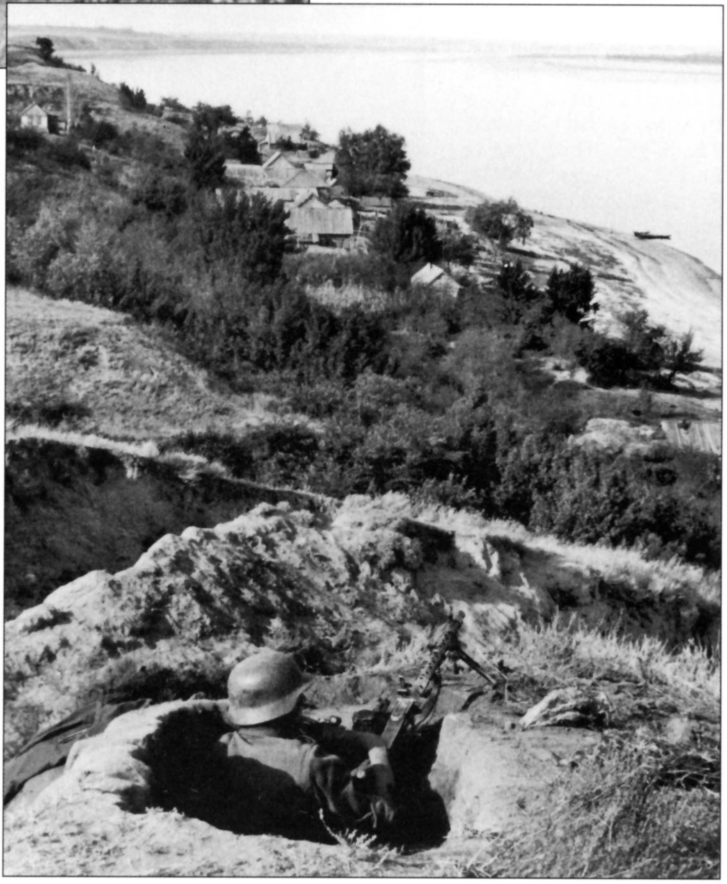
An 8.8cm FlaK 36 pumps round after round into the northern outskirts of Stalingrad. German heavy artillery pound enemy positions on the outskirts of the city reducing it to burning rubble. The Acht-Achter was used for such direct-fire support and as an antitank weapon, but its high-velocity and long barrel made it ill suited for indirect fire, a role it was never used in.



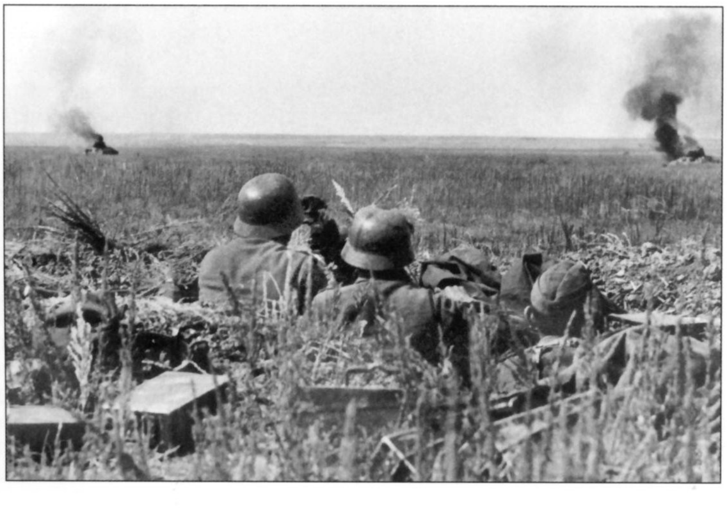
A group of German soldiers survey the damage to two Soviet fighters north of the city. The aircraft in the left foreground is a Polikarpov I-16 fighter. This particular plane suffered badly at the hands of the Luftwaffe. To the Germans it was known as the Rata (Rat) owing to the ugly appearance with overly large radical engine cowling. The cannibalized biplane is a Polikarpov I-153 fighter.



Two members of a 7.92mm MG-34 open fire on suspected enemy targets on the outskirts of the city in early September. The machine gun is fitted with a Gurttrommel 34 (basket drum) containing a 50-round belt. A Schützengruppe (rifle group) was divided into a five to six-man Schützentrupp (rifle troop) under the assistant squad leader and a three-man Maschinengewehrtrupp (machine gun troop) plus the group leader, an Unteroffizier. Both wear Gummibänder (rubber bands) cut from vehicle tire inner tubes on their helmets to secure camouflage materials.

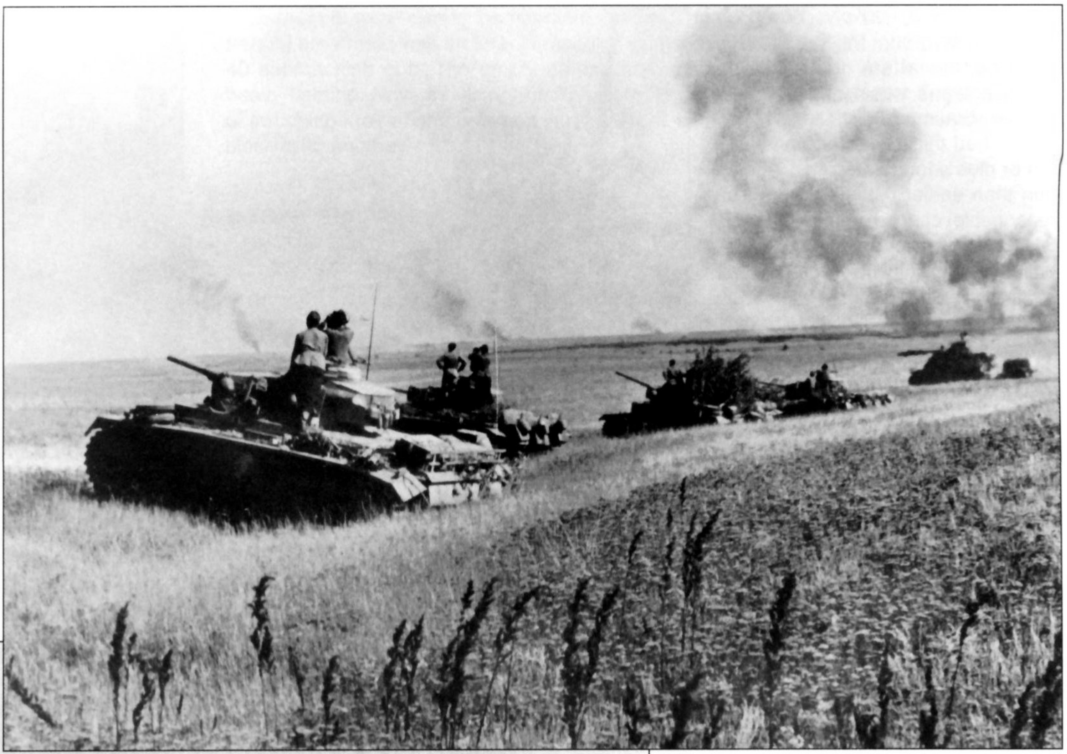


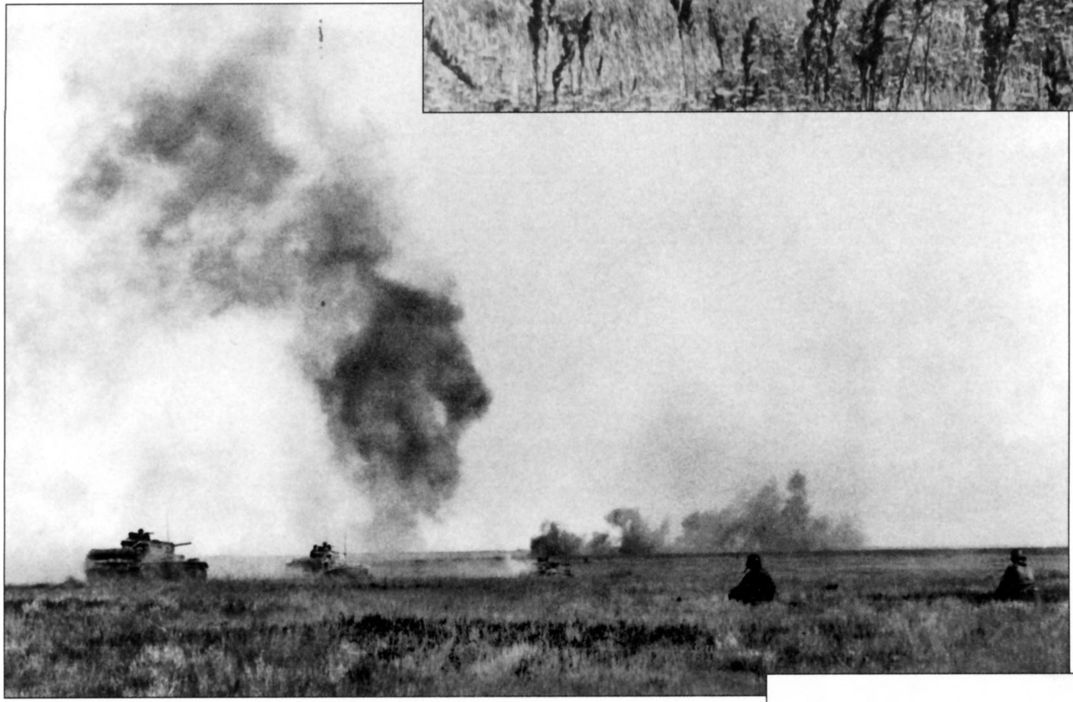
A machine gunner smokes a pipe while overlooking the Volga from his Maschinengewehrloch (machine gun hole). This type of simple circular fighting position was also known as a Russisches Loch or Ruslock (Russian hole). He is armed with an MG-34 and a 9mm P-38 pistol (unseen) habitually carried in a holster on the left front of his Koppel (belt), but what the Landser called a Bauchbinde (bellyband).



A Schützenloch für Maschinegewehr (firing hole for a machine gun) was more commonly known to Landsers as a Maschinengewehrnest (machine gun nest). The optical sight of the MG-34 can be seen between the two helmeted crewmen. In German service the terms leichte (light) and schwere (heavy) Maschinengewehre defined the role and not the weight of the gun, as both roles were filled by the 7.92mm MG-34. Rifle groups had a light machine gun with a bipod and carried one or two spare barrels. A heavy machine gun group also had the bipod-fitted machine gun, but additionally carried a heavy tripod, an optical sight, and additional spare barrels to provide long-range, sustained fire. The number of discarded ammunition cases attest that the two burning T-34s were accompanied by large numbers of rifle troops, now mostly scattered in the wheat field, Ausradieren (Rub out. To wipe out or totally destroy a position, vehicle, or installation).

Pz.Kpfw. IIIs halt to survey the broad steppe spread before them. The smoke from several brewed up Soviet tanks can be seen in the background. These tanks of 4. Panzer-Armee were south of Stalingrad in early September advancing to reach the city and reinforce the assault troops.



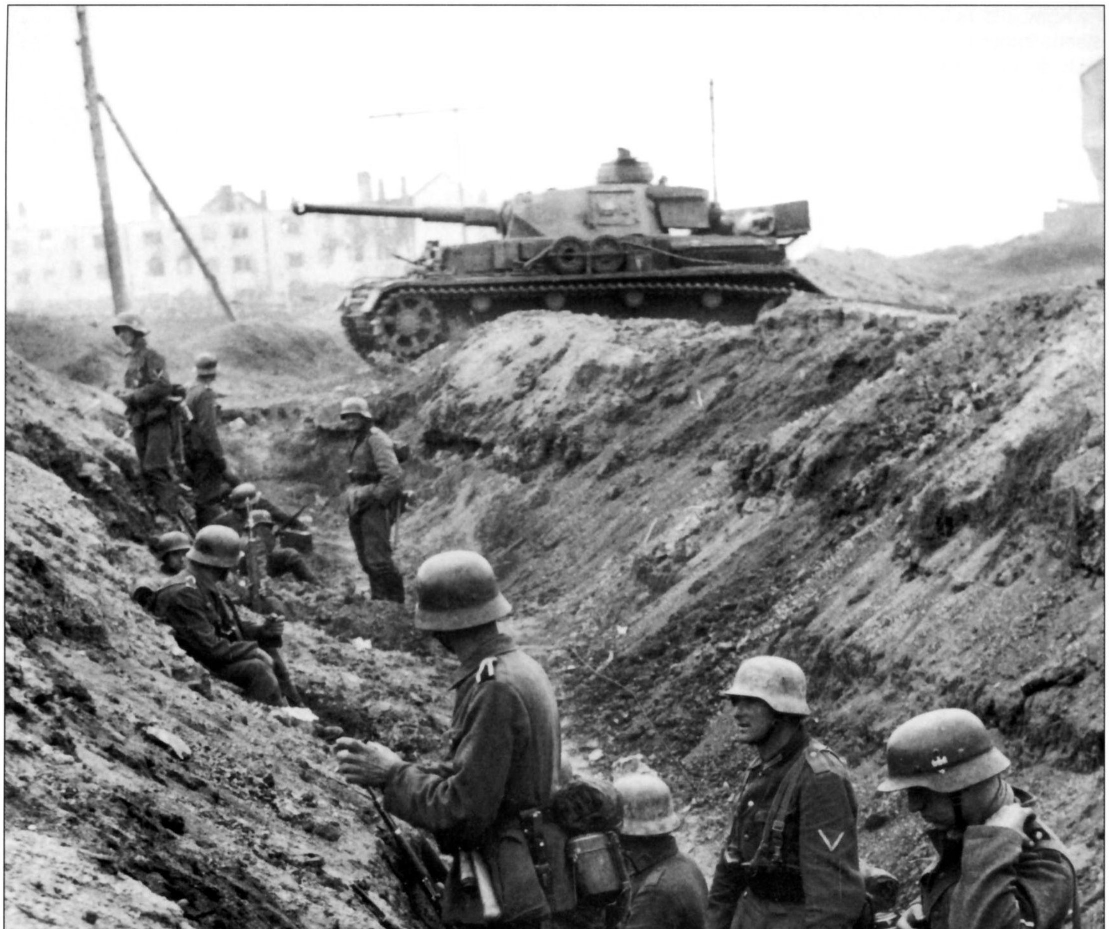


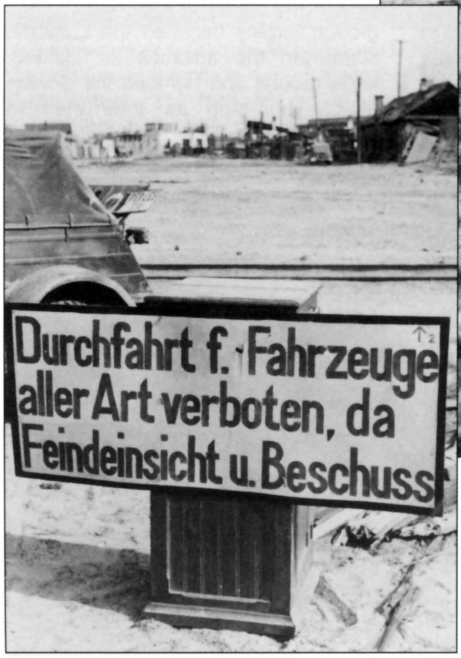
More Pz.Kpfw. IIIs continue to advance south of the city, this time moving forward to engage Soviet units being attacked by dive-bombers. During this period the German offensive gained ground largely because the Luftwaffe supported the advance in relatively large groups and bombed the Soviets almost non-stop as they tried to counterattack.

Two Landser assist a walking wounded Kamerad, his shoulder bandaged with his Verbandspäckchen (wound packets). With any "luck" this might be rated as a Heimatschuß (home wound), allowing him to be sent back to Germany for recovery.

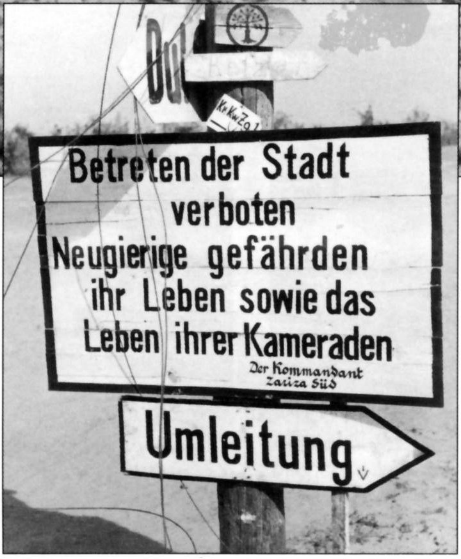
Smoke rises from the fires caused by Stuka raids on the city. On 2 September the Luftwaffe undertook yet another bombing of Stalingrad. The city was now one massive smoking ruin and fires could be seen for many kilometers. Eventually it was said there was noting left to burn. Undeterred by the relentless bombardment and low morale, the Soviet 62nd Army continued to attack the 4. Panzer-Armee elements in an attempt to keep them from linking up with 6. Armee.

Supported by a Pz.Kpfw. IV Ausf. F2 infantrymen rest before resuming the attack in a former Soviet antitank trench, most likely dug by Stalingrad's citizens. The Ausf. F had thicker frontal and side armor plus a longer barreled 7.5cm gun than earlier models giving it a reasonable chance against the T-34. By the appearance of their uniforms the soldiers seem to be relatively fresh. The three standing men in the foreground include an Unteroffizier and two Gefreiter. An Infanterist (infantryman) was variously known as a Fußlappenindianer (moccasin Indian), Sandlatscher (sand traipser), or Stoppelhopser (stubble-hopper). Infantrymen suffered and the neglect they endured that called Schütze Arsch (rifleman's neglect).

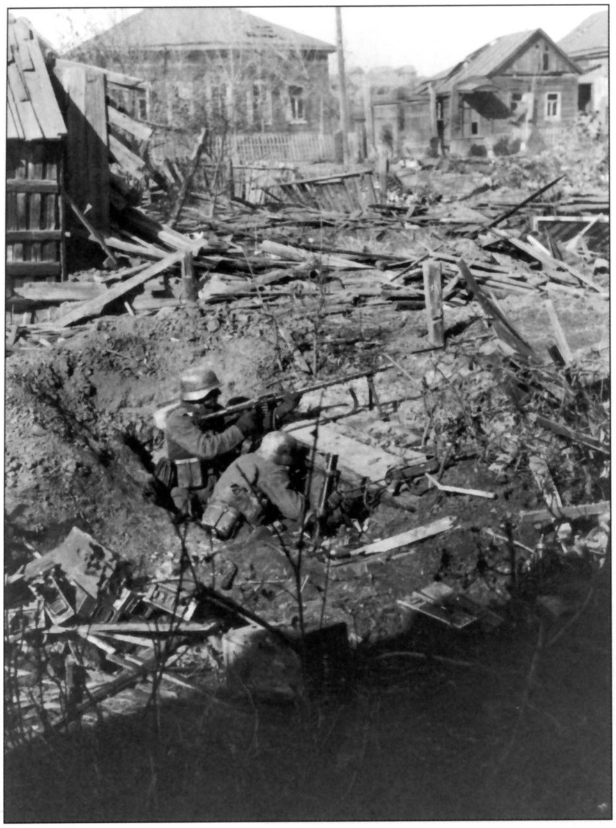



Durchfahrt f. Fahrzeuge
aller Art verboten, da
Feindeinsicht u. Beschuss

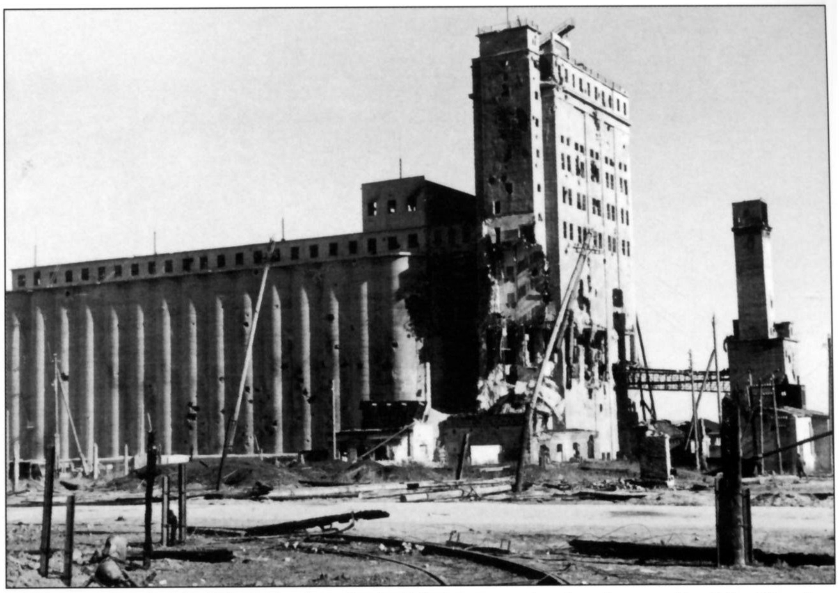
On 3 September 6. Armee and 4. Panzer-Armee finally linked up and the Soviet forces in Stalingrad were encircled. A German sign on the outskirts of the city reads, "Vehicles are forbidden to pass through the town as they are visible to the enemy and bombardment will follow."

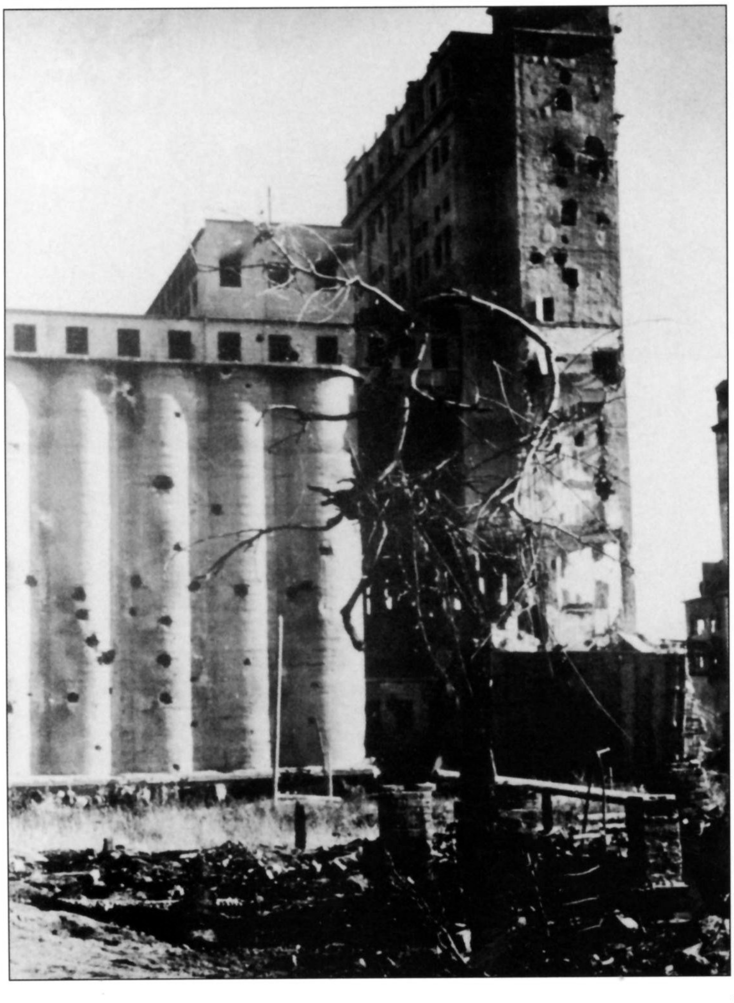

Betreten der Stadt
verboten
Neugierige gefährden
ihr Leben sowie das
Leben ihrer Kameraden
Der Kommandant
Zariza Süd
Umleitung

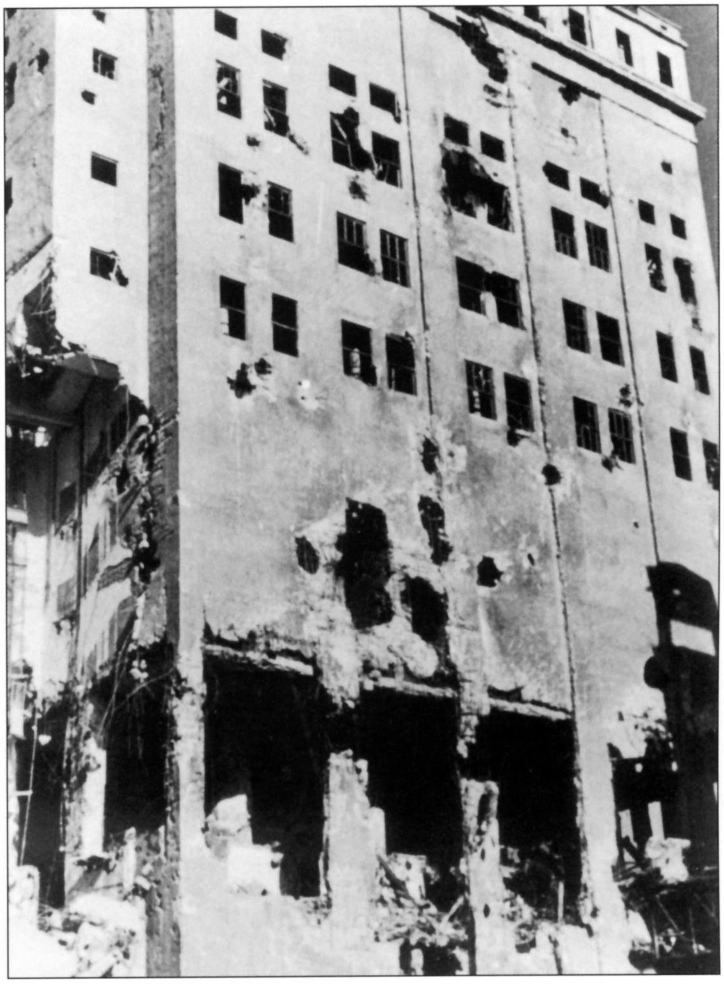
Another German sign posted in Stalingrad reads, "Entry into the city is forbidden. Sightseers endanger not only their own lives but also the lives of their comrades." This was an effort to keep curious rear service troops, Etappenschweine (rear swine), seeking souvenirs out of the way of the Frontsoldaten. "Umleitung" means "Detour."



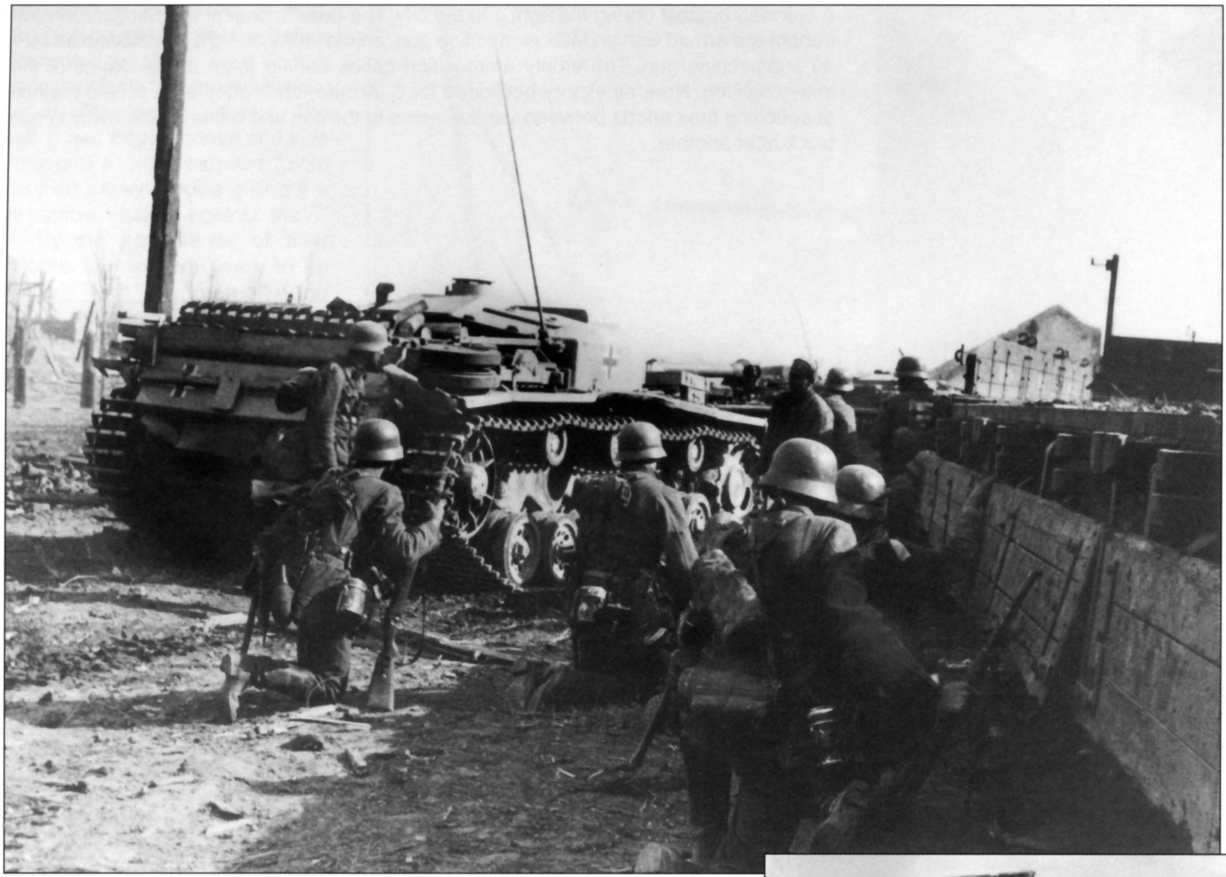
A German outpost during the fight into the city. The two Landser in the Stichgraben (slit trench) are armed with an MG-34 machine gun, a 5cm leGW.36 light mortar, and an MP-40 submachine gun. The empty ammunition cases behind them are evidence of the heavy fighting. Now, as victory beckoned for 6. Armee, units adopted a simple method of switching their efforts between various areas in the city and battering their way in one block after another.





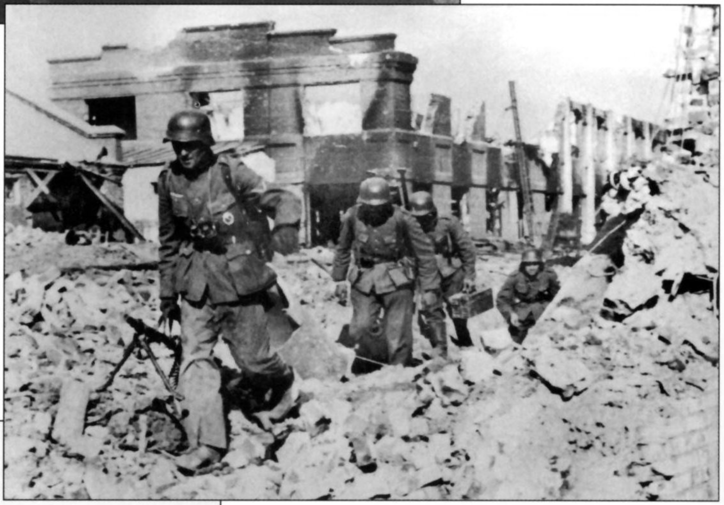


Three photographs of the grain silo in Stalingrad, one of the most strongly defended buildings in the city. In this huge grain elevator, south of the Tsaritsa Gorge, the fighting was merciless. Both sides incurred terrible losses trying to capturing and retain it. For three days troops of 24. Panzer-Division pounded the massive concrete structure with artillery, antitank guns, mortars, and tank guns, setting the grain on fire. Hand-to-hand combat raged through the structure and by 21 September the Germans finally captured it. The fighting then moved to Red Square, to a nail factory, and the Univermag Department Store.

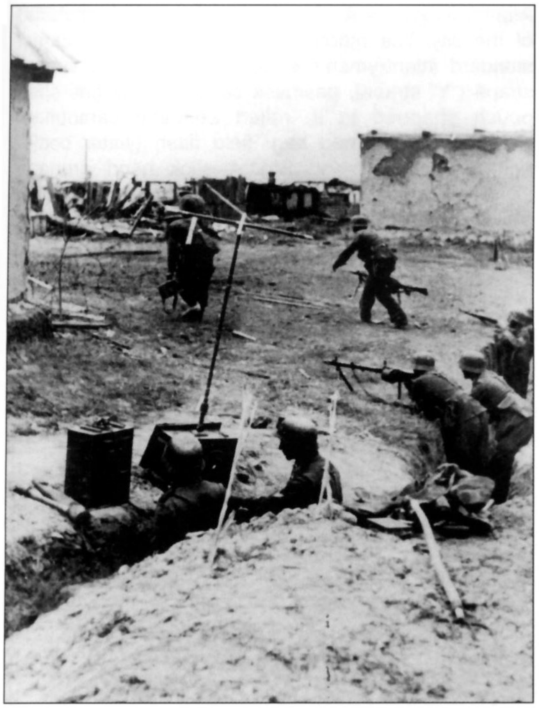


The fighting now focused on the central railroad station. On the morning of 17 September the Soviet defenders subjected to a heavy attack by infantry and 20 tanks and assault guns. Here, a Schützengruppe, supported by a StuG III Ausf. F assault gun armed with a long 7.5cm gun, also known as a Sturmgeschütze 40, awaits orders to advance through the railway sidings and shattered rolling stock. In the center of the picture there is a Soviet prisoner.

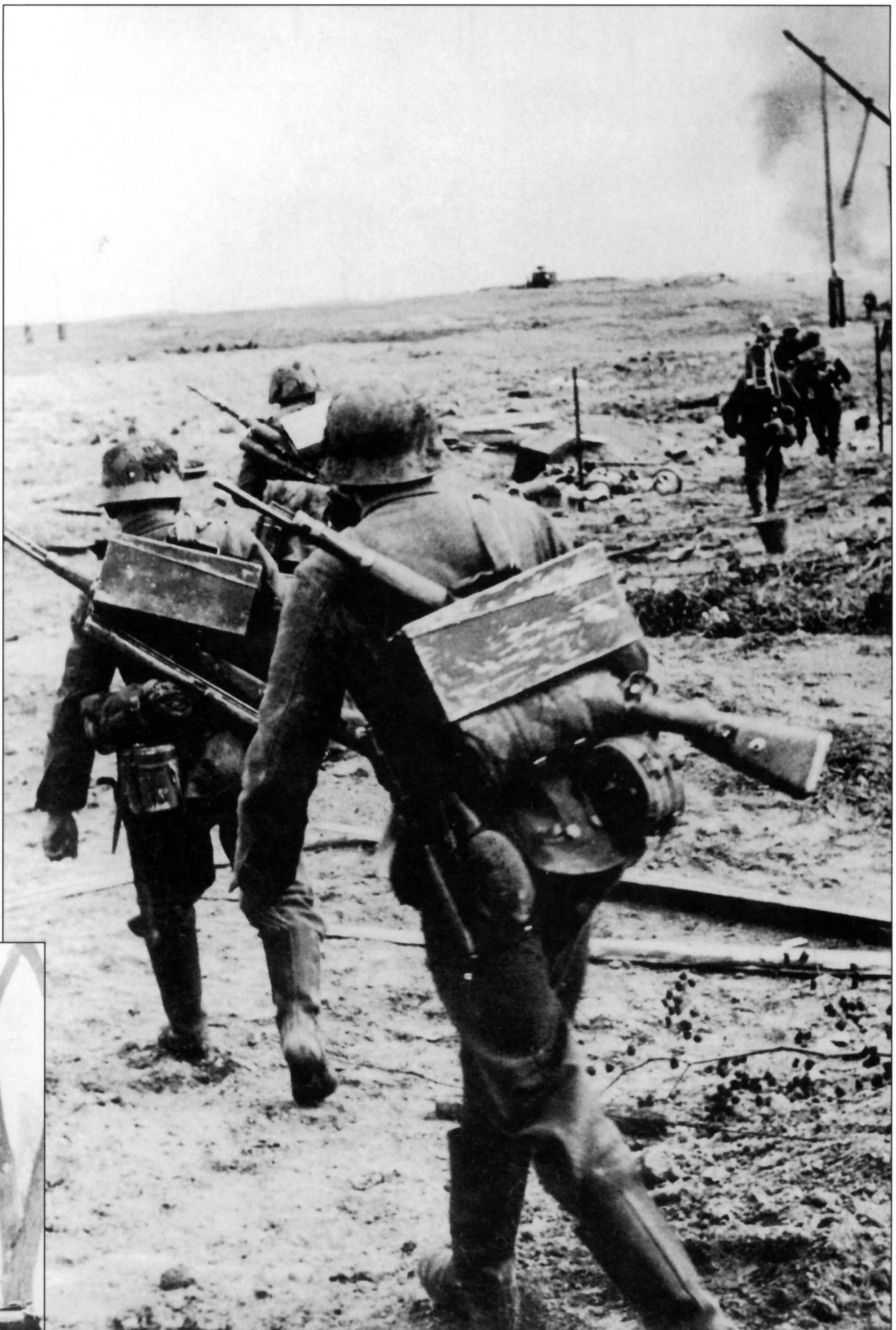
An MG-34-armed Maschinengewehrtrupp trudges through the rubble strewn streets to a new position. A machine gun troop normally carried one or two spare barrels, which were changed after about 250 rounds of continuous firing to allow one to cool before it was again used. By now all the infantry inside Stalingrad could be referred to as Alte Hasen (Old hares (rabbits), old hands, combat veterans. One who has managed to stay alive.



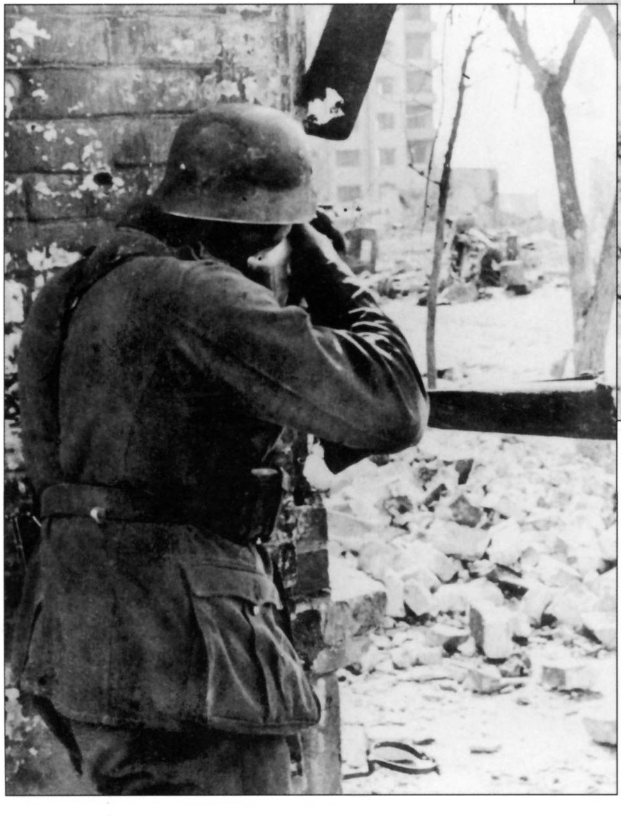
Frontkameraden. Kameradschaft (comradeship) had a deep and serious meaning within the Heer forming a strong bond between men who fought together. The Frontgemeinschaft (front community) signified solidarity between Frontkameraden, among whom advancement was determined by proven skill and bullets saw no distinction between classes. It was a factor needed to maintain Kampfgeist (battle spirit), meaning absolute duty and obedience, which were deemed necessary for a high degree of morale.



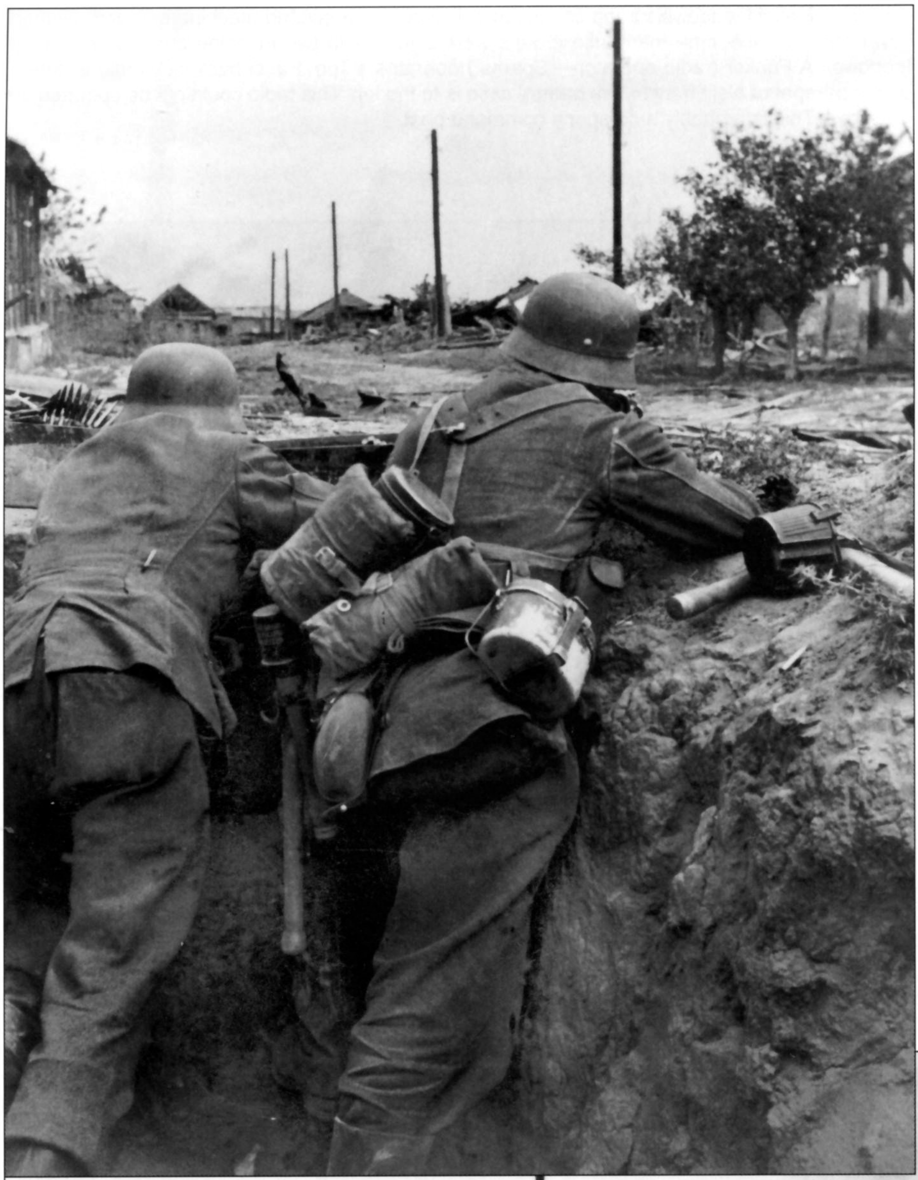
A leichter Maschinengewehrtrupp cautiously advances as a second machine gun and riflemen cover them. By this time many rifle groups were armed with two machine guns for increased firepower. A Funker (radio operator—"Sparks") operates a Torn.Fu. bl backpack radio is set-up on the parapet of a slit trench. The battery case is to the left. This radio could not be operated on the move. This is probably a company command post.



A schwerer Maschinengewehrtrupp advances through the wasteland of the northern suburbs. They carry ammunition containers and multiple spare barrel containers. The tail man in the background group in the upper right carries the heavy machine gun tripod on his back for which two shoulder straps and pads were provided. This unit has smeared mud on their helmets for camouflage.

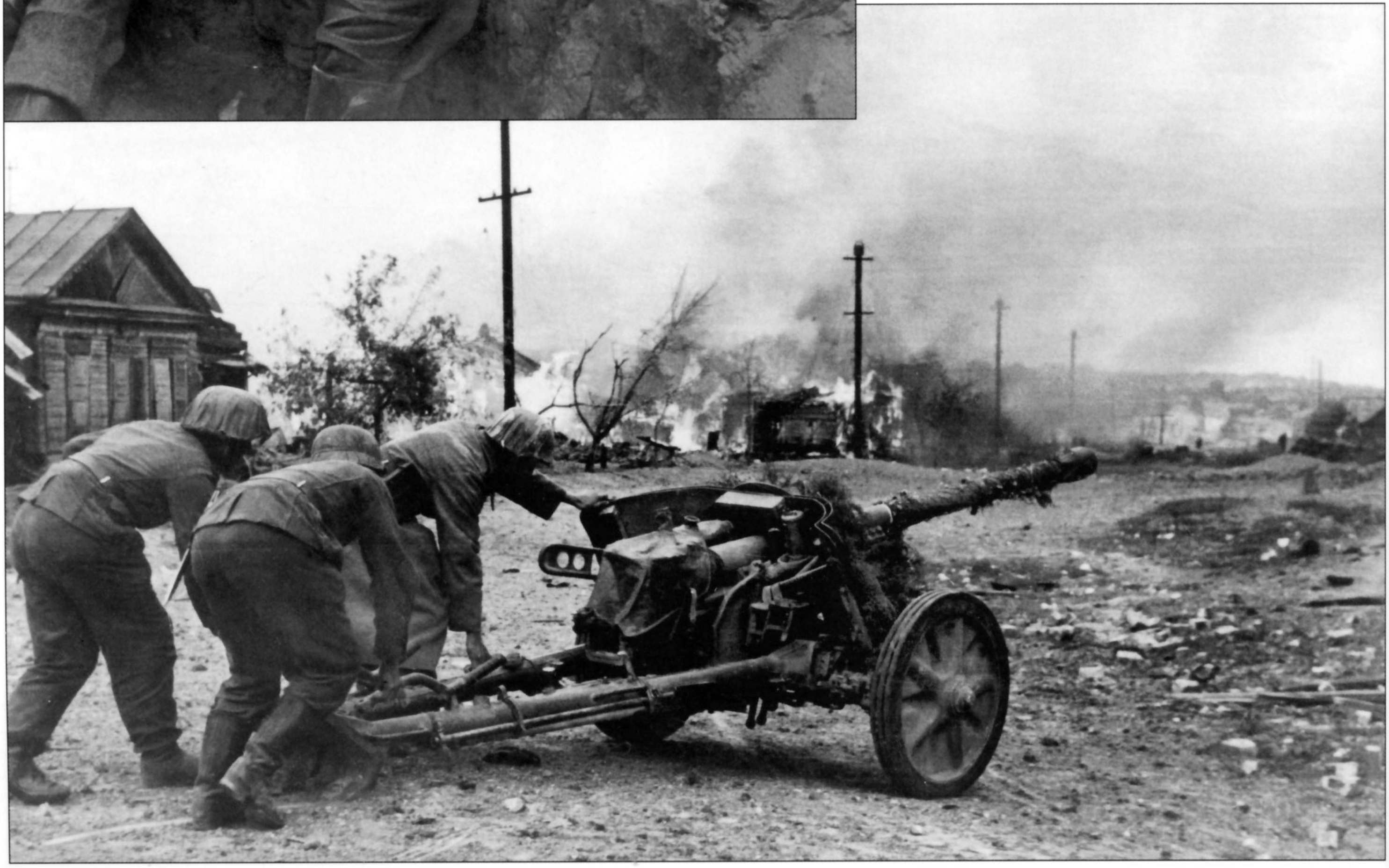


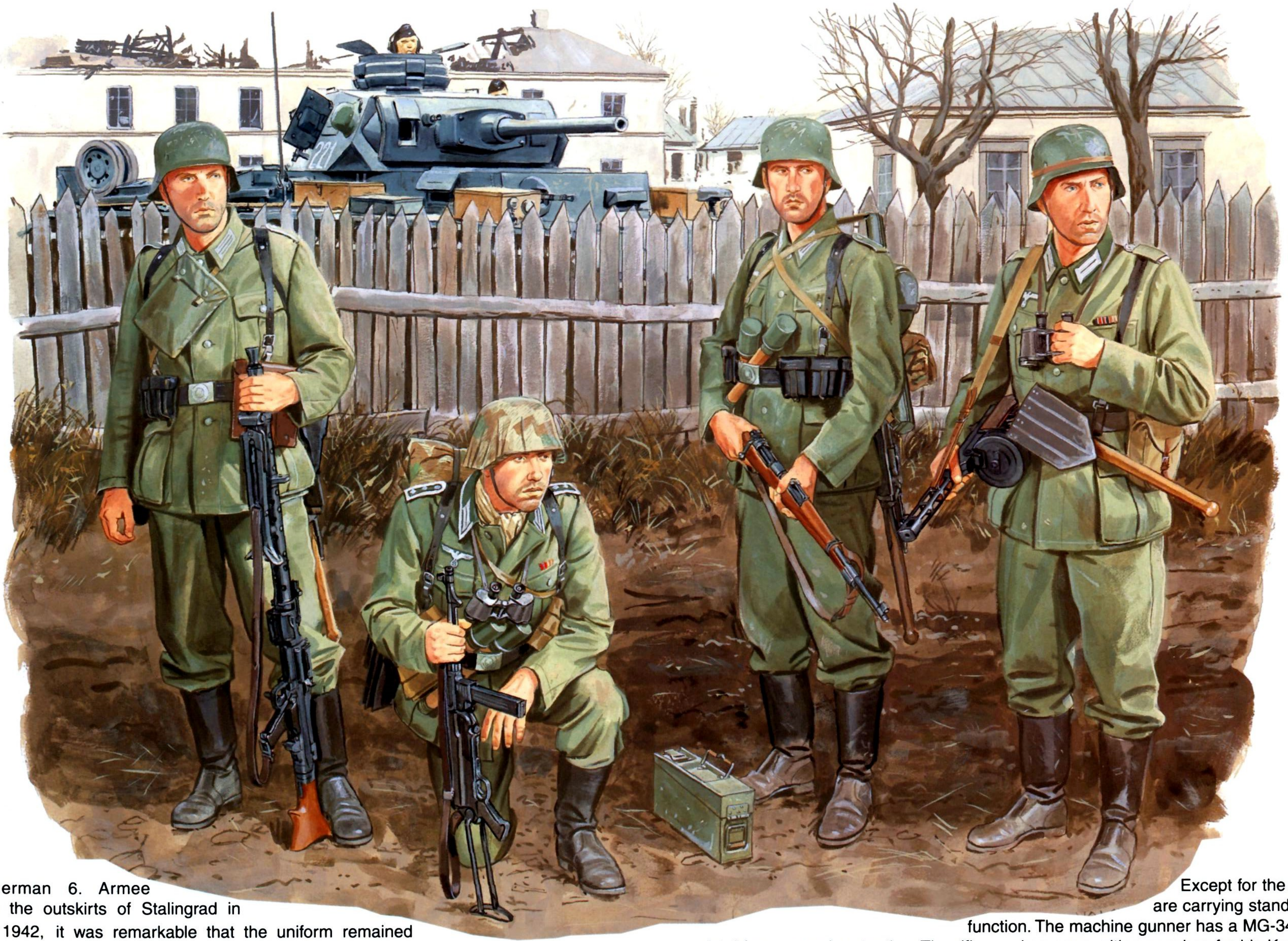
A Landser takes aim at a target near a block of destroyed apartments. He is armed with a 7.92mm G.41(W) semi-automatic rifle. It had a 10-round fixed magazine and was loaded with the same five-round stripper slips as used with the *Kar.98k* bolt-action carbine. The demand for these rifles was made after the Germans had encountered Soviet semi-automatic rifles, but the Selbstladegewehr saw only very limited distribution.



A machine gun nest firing down a street on the outskirts of the city. The machine gunner to the right carries standard infantryman's equipment to include support straps ("Y" straps), gasmask case with his gas sheet pouch strapped to it, rolled Zeltbahn camouflage shelter-quarter, bread bag, field flash (water bottle), entrenching tool, and Stg.24 stick hand grenade. Contrasting him is his assistant gunner who has shed his equipment. The two metal belt support hook integral to his tunic can be seen.

On the outskirts of the city the crew of a 5cm PaK 38 antitank gun is manhandled forward. Marginally effective against T-34 tanks, it was effective against lighter tanks, field fortifications, and defended buildings. The gun's spaced armor shield is visible. This provided better protection from small arms rounds and fragments while keeping the weight down as opposed to a solid thick shield. This gun has camouflage materials fastened to its barrel shield. The PaK 38 was provided with armor-piercing, improved armor-piercing, and high explosive rounds. The crew wears cloth helmet camouflage covers.





As the German 6. Armee approached the outskirts of Stalingrad in September 1942, it was remarkable that the uniform remained much the same as it was when the war began three years earlier.

The M40 field blouse was most common but the M35 tunic with its dark green collar was still quite evident. Field gray marching boots, tucked into marching boots were predominant but the short lace up ankle boots and gaiter began to appear in an effort to conserve leather. The M40 helmet was generally painted a matt dark gray. Attempts at further camouflage were made by adding rubber bands to attach foliage or even fabricating a cover from a discarded Zeltbahn.

The equipment worn by these infantrymen could carry enough to sustain them for several days.

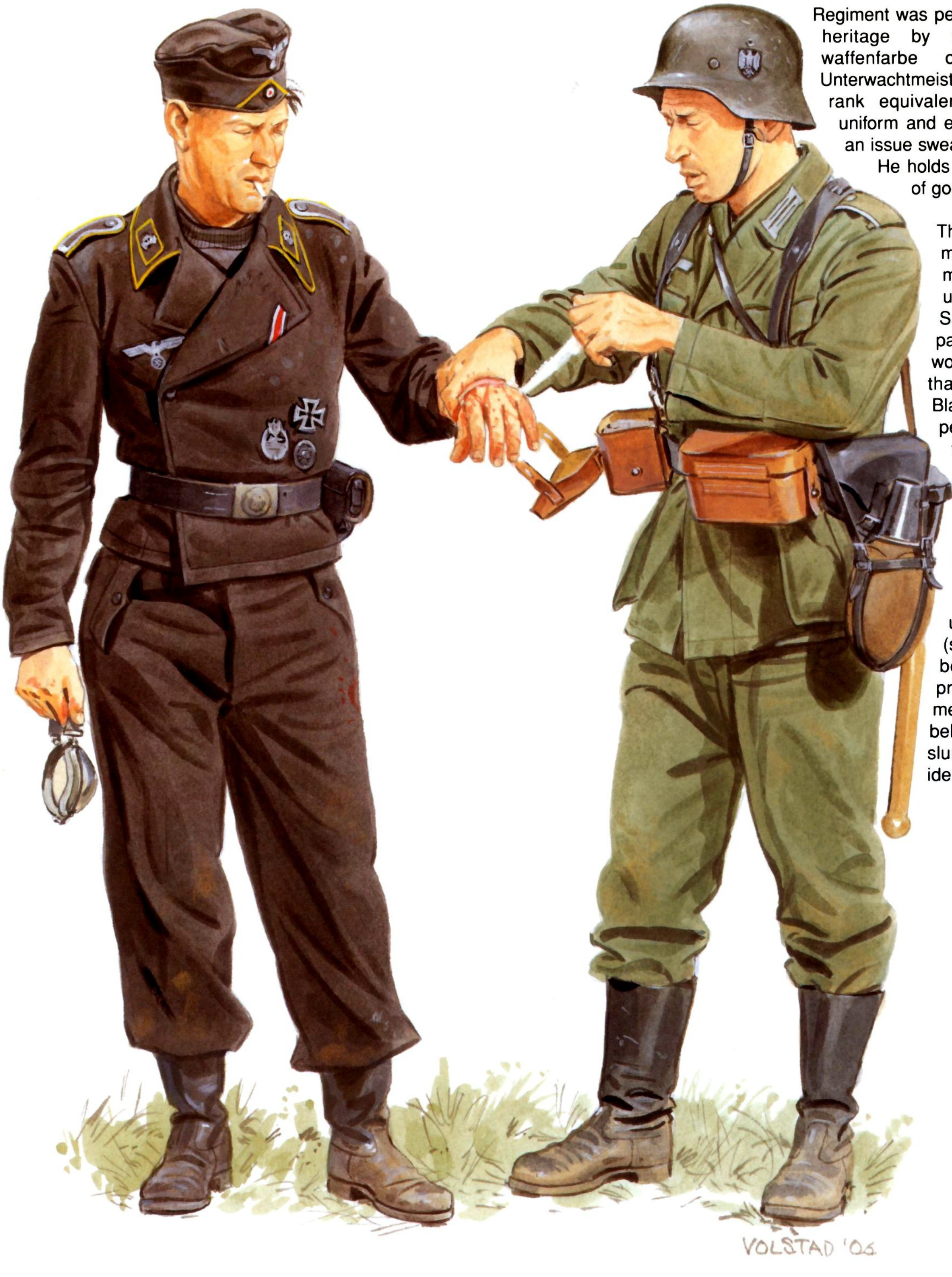
Except for the officer at right, all are carrying standard items for their function. The machine gunner has a MG-34 parts pouch and a pistol for personal protection. The rifleman has ammunition pouches for his Kar 98k and a spare barrel for the MG-34. Both the NCO and the officer have map cases and binoculars. The former has the standard pouches for his MP-40 while the officer has chosen to carry a captured PPSh-41 with a spare drum on his belt.

It is notable that the officer (with slip-on covers obscuring his shoulder boards) had chosen to wear a modified enlisted men's uniform in action. The only concession to his rank was the false turn-back cuffs that were applied to the sleeves. The parade or cavalry pattern support suspenders aided his effort to not stand out from his men, thus he was less likely to be targeted by Soviet snipers.

Even at the end of 1942, most Panzer crewmen still wore their distinctive black wool Panzer uniform. After two summers of campaigns on the Eastern Front, it had been found lacking as being too hot and offering little in the way of camouflage when dismounted. Some AFV crewmen had received cotton (HBT or denim) variants of the Panzer uniform in more appropriate green shades for the summer months while others wore some manner of working uniform. However, by fall, the warmer wool uniform was appreciated.

The 24. Panzer-Division was formed in 1941, by the conversion of the 1. Kavallerie-Division to armor. The 24. Panzer-Regiment was permitted to acknowledge that heritage by wearing the gold-yellow waffenfarbe of cavalry units. This Unterwachtmeister also retained the cavalry rank equivalent to Unterfeldwebel. His uniform and equipment are standard with an issue sweater worn over his gray shirt. He holds one of a multitude of styles of goggles in his hand.

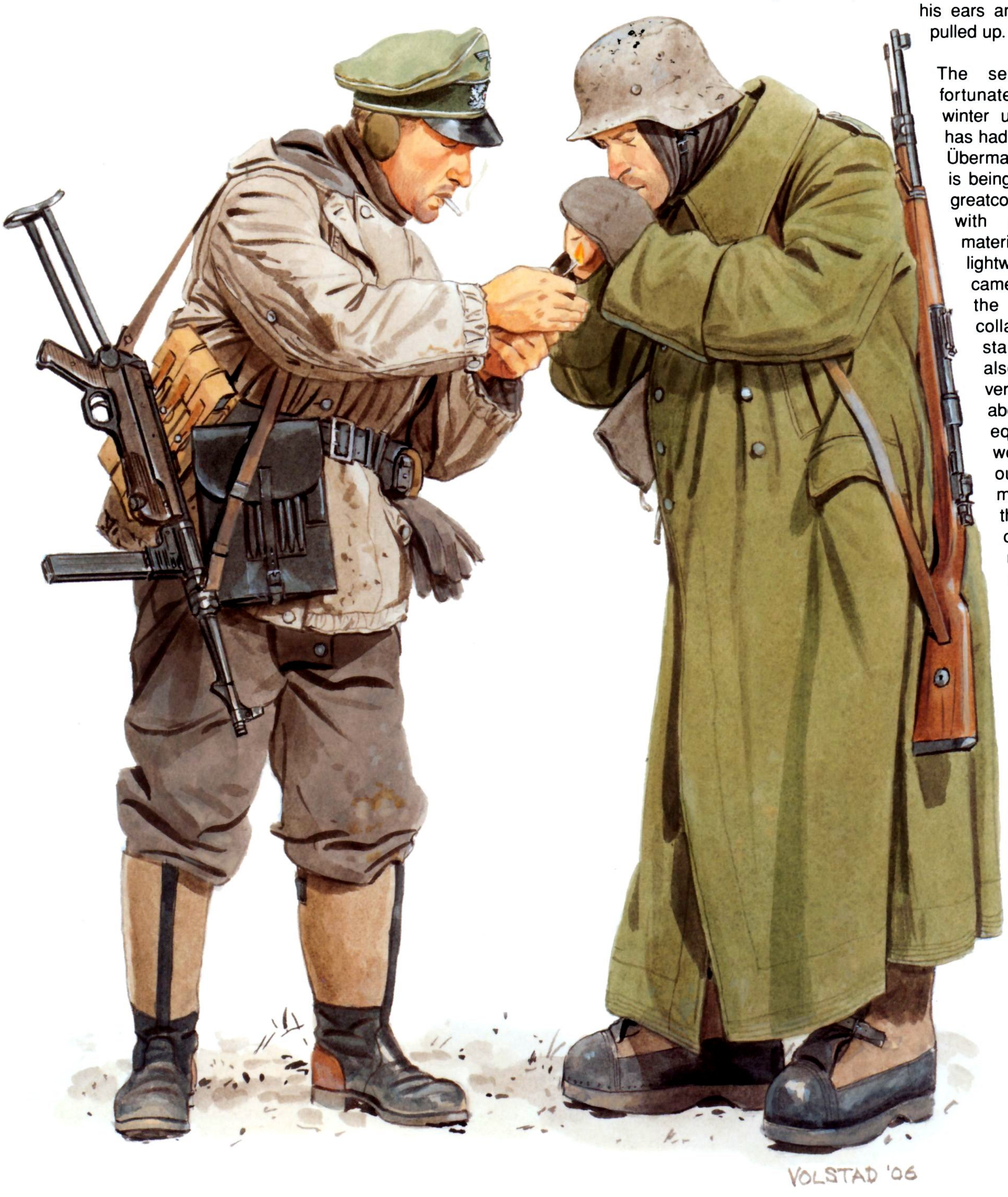
The Panzer crewman has a minor wound attended by a medic ("Sani") in an infantry unit. It is worth noting that the Sanitätsoldat that served as part of another type of unit would wear the Waffenfarbe of that unit (White for infantry, Black for Pionier, etc.). Medical personnel of a medical unit would wear their own "cornflower blue" piping. Medical personnel were authorized to wear a Red Cross armband but this was not always recognized as a benefit, particularly for the frontline medic. It was not uncommon for a sidearm (such as the P-08 shown) to be worn for personal protection. Only the pair of medical pouches worn on his belt and the 1-liter water flask slung across his body really identifies him as a "Sani".

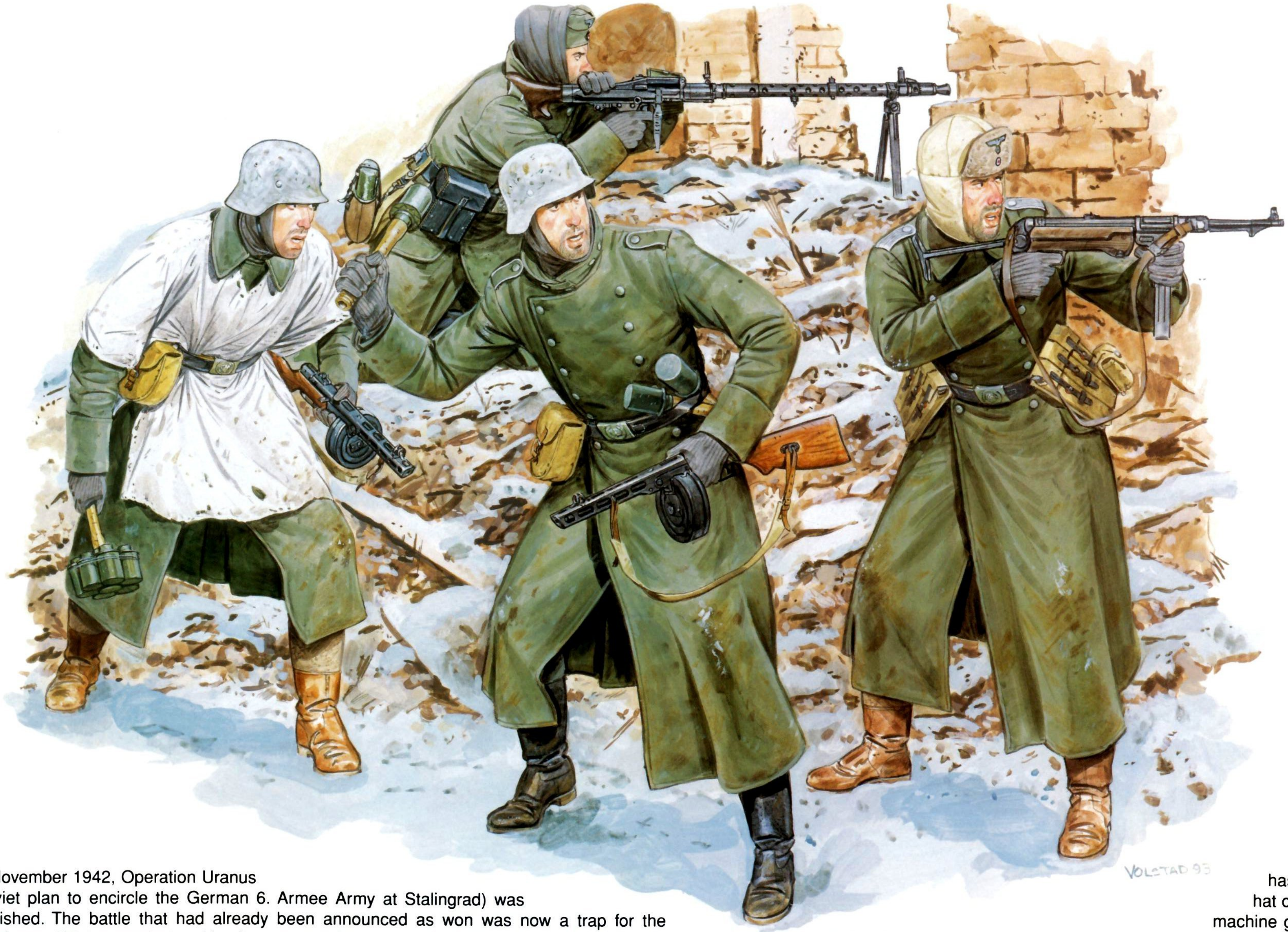


The encircled Sixth Army continued to receive supplies flown in by the Luftwaffe, however it was never enough. Ammunition and food were the main priorities but it is obvious that some of the new winter clothing was successfully delivered.

This officer was fortunate enough to receive a complete set of jacket and trousers plus the felt boots. The initial winter uniform was reversible from mouse gray to white. The first versions had the gray side made from wool while later types reverted to cotton (of varying shades of gray, field gray and even Luftwaffe blue gray). In an effort to preserve the cleanliness of the white side, it was common to see a gray parka worn with white trousers or vice versa. Officers often wore earmuffs of several types which allowed them to continue to wear at least one officer's distinction; his 'old style field cap'. If it got cold enough, the toque around his neck could be pulled over his ears and his parka's hood pulled up.

The sentry hasn't been fortunate in receiving the winter uniform. Instead, he has had to make do with the Übermantel (surcoat) which is being worn over his own greatcoat. These were lined with a heavy blanket material and often had a lightweight cloth hood that came out from beneath the back of the large collar. The coat had standard pockets but also had a pair of vertical "muff" pockets above them. Any field equipment is being worn beneath this outer garment. That might suggest that their situation is not currently at too much risk. The heavy felt mittens could be worn over the standard wool gloves rather like the clumsy felt, leather and wood sentry boots could be worn over marching boots. Naturally, the sentry boots were intended for static duty and would likely be given to the next guard on duty…perhaps the Übermantel as well.





On 23 November 1942, Operation Uranus (the Soviet plan to encircle the German 6. Armee Army at Stalingrad) was accomplished. The battle that had already been announced as won was now a trap for the German forces. Winter was just making its presence known.

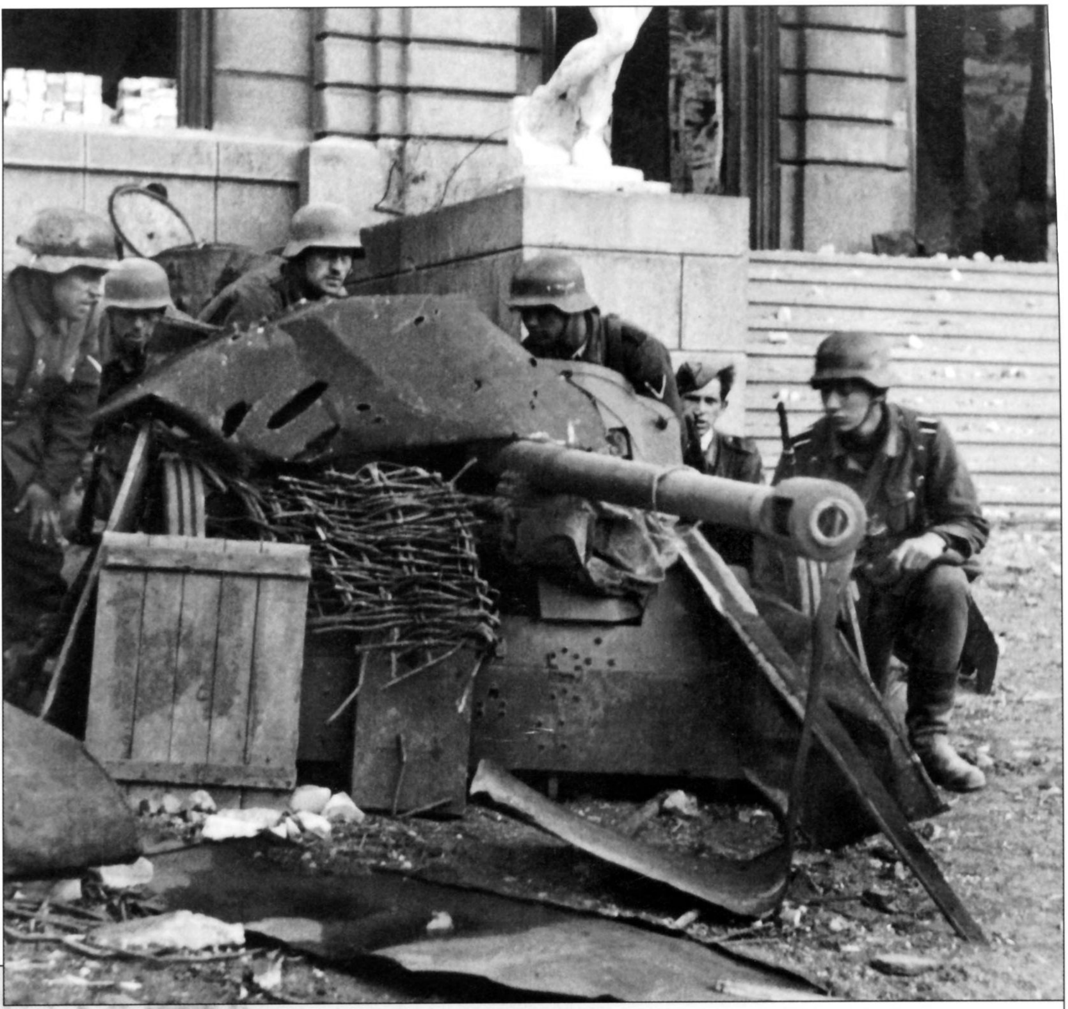
The soldiers trapped at Stalingrad at least had their standard issue great coats for warmth. These coats would have been carried as part of the unit's baggage and brought forward when needed. Of course, these were never adequate for the typical Russian winter but for many, it was all that was available. The Luftwaffe struggled to airlift supplies to the surrounded Army and provided the gloves, toques and boots worn by these grenadiers.

The toque was merely a sleeve of wool that could be worn around the neck or over the head as a simple means of providing warmth. Several could be used at one time. The officer with the MP-40 has acquired a sheepskin hat of unknown source. The machine gunner has abandoned his frigid steel helmet entirely and pulled his toque up over his M38 field cap.

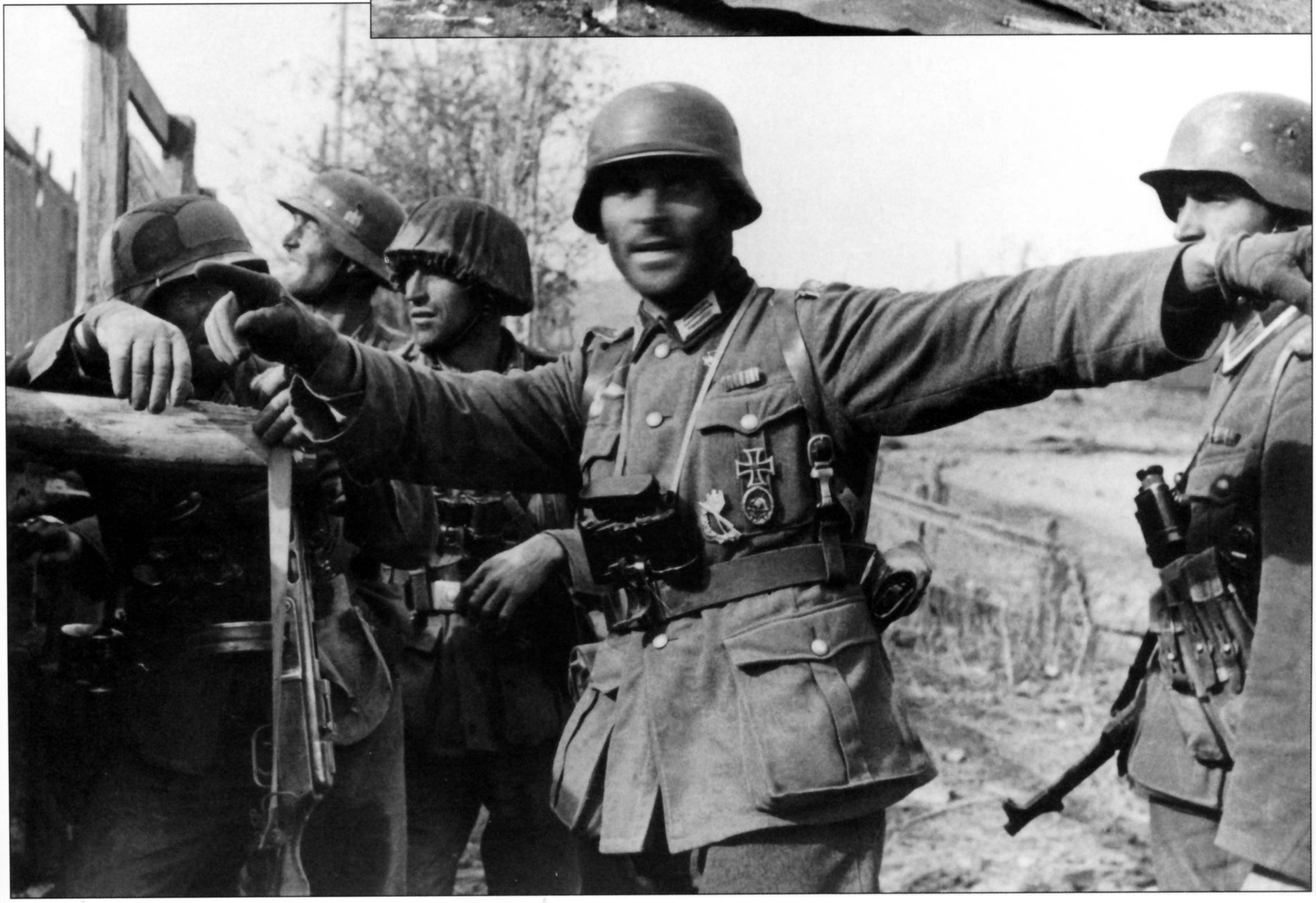
The struggle for ammunition and other supplies forced the encircled Germans to make use of captured enemy equipment when possible. It was quite common to see the Soviet PPSh-41 being carried by grenadiers. In the close confines of the city, grenades were of considerable use with the standard M1924 stick grenade most evident. When a stronger blast was desired, it was possible to wire six grenade heads to another grenade (Geballte Ladung).

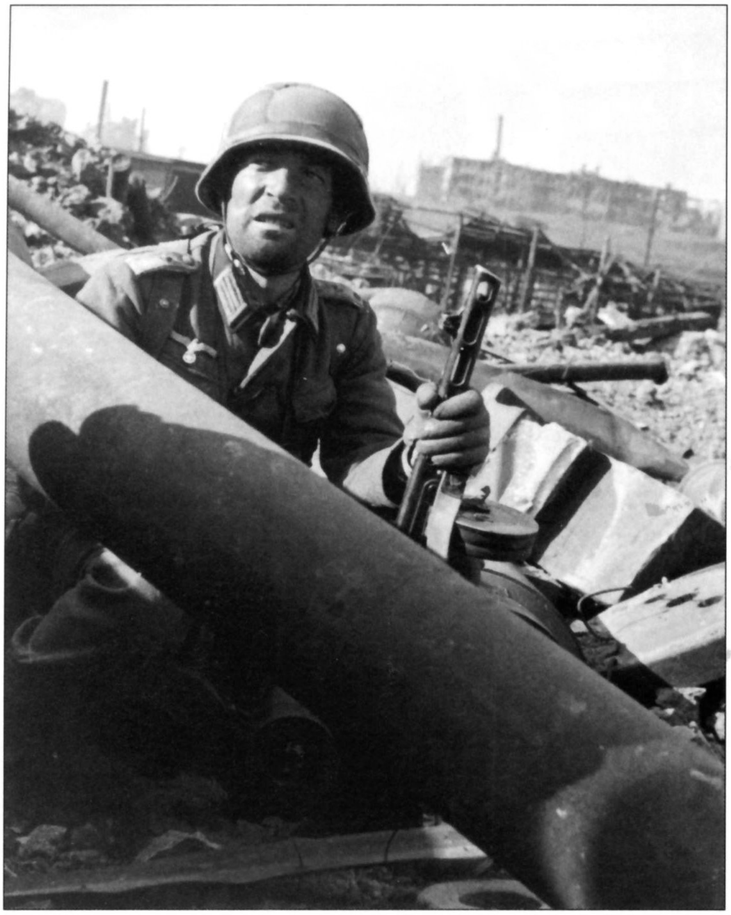
There was occasional use of extemporized camouflage, using bed linen or tablecloths. Some managed to whitewash their helmets.

This 5cm PaK 38 antitank gun crew is partly composed of Luftwaffe personnel, what the Landser called Ersatz-Landser (substitute soldiers). This type of camouflage disguised the gun sufficiently to give it an edge on an approaching tank that might not detect its position in time to survive.

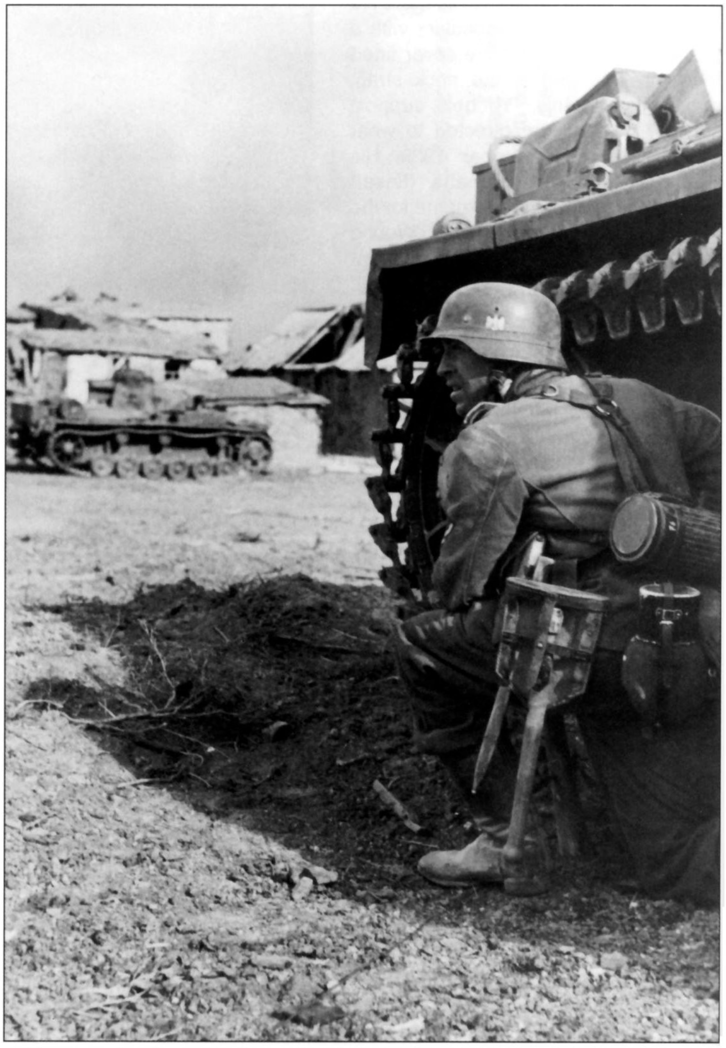


A Leutnant gives orders to his men. He wears standard 6x30 binoculars with a leather eyepiece protective cover fitted (normally attached to the neck strap, and enlistedmen's "Y" belt support straps. Officers were directed to wear such straps in November 1939. His Blech (tin-wear) or Lametta (tinsel) include das Kreuz (the nickname for the Eisernes Kreuz—Iron Cross), Wound Badge with much of the black paint worn off, and the Infantry Assault Badge with part of the wreath broken off. A soldier wearing a large number of ribbons and other decorations was said to be a Bandhändler (ribbon-dealer). Standing to his left is a Hauptmann, probably a Kompaniechef, armed with a Soviet PPSh-41 submachine gun. These soldiers wear a variety of helmet camouflage means to include Gummibänder, a cloth cover on the center man, and the Oberleutnant has a scarce camouflage-painted helmet.

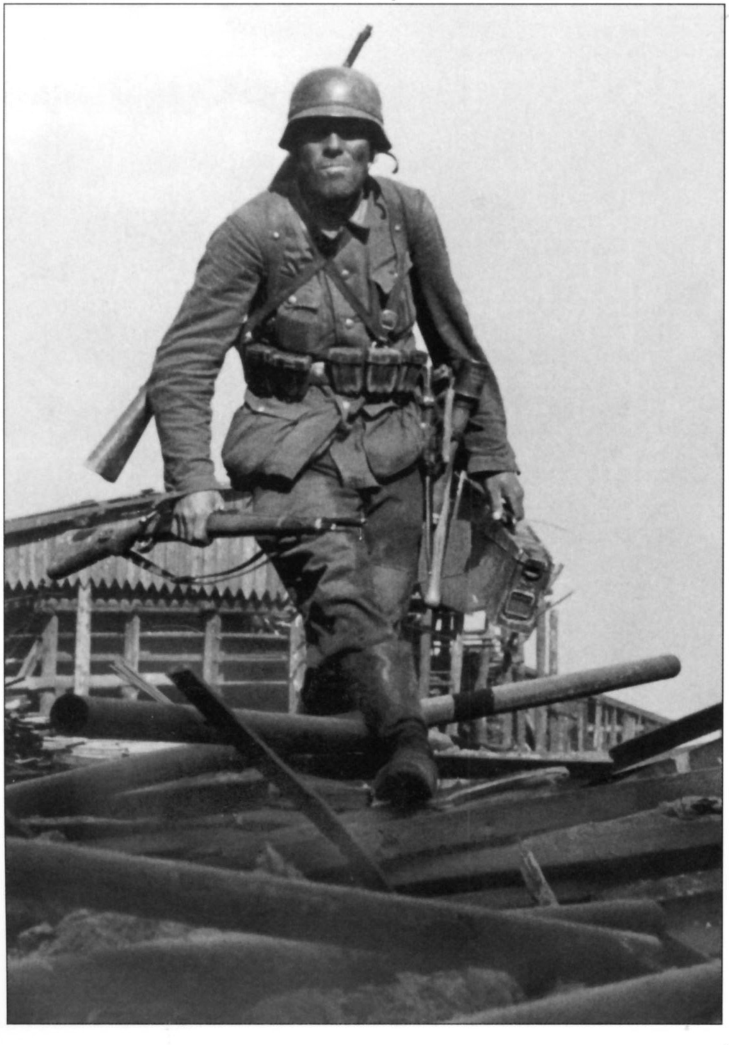




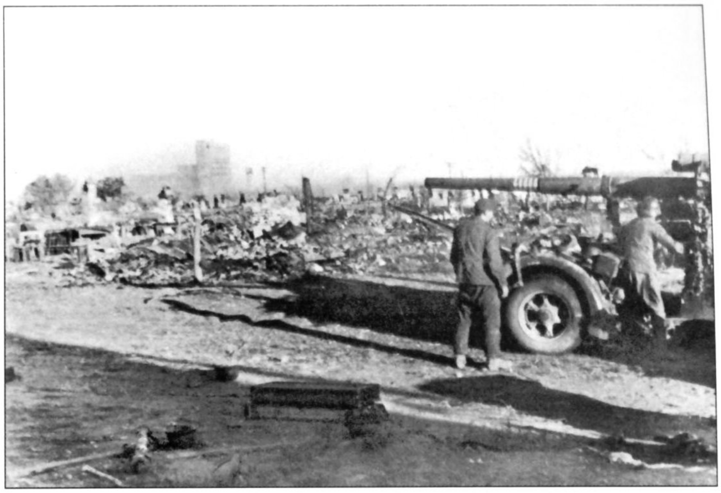
This Hauptmann, with the lower pip (stern) missing from his right shoulder board, is armed with a 7.62mm PPSh-41 submachine gun with a 71-round magazine. The Soviets referred to it as the Finka, a Finnish nickname for a woman and the Germans sometimes used the term. They also referred to it as an MP.717(r). It was widely used by the Germans as they assumed it superior to their own machine pistols. It was rugged, reliable, and had a large magazine capacity, but offered poor penetration and knockdown power. The main reason for its use was simply to increase automatic weapons fire.



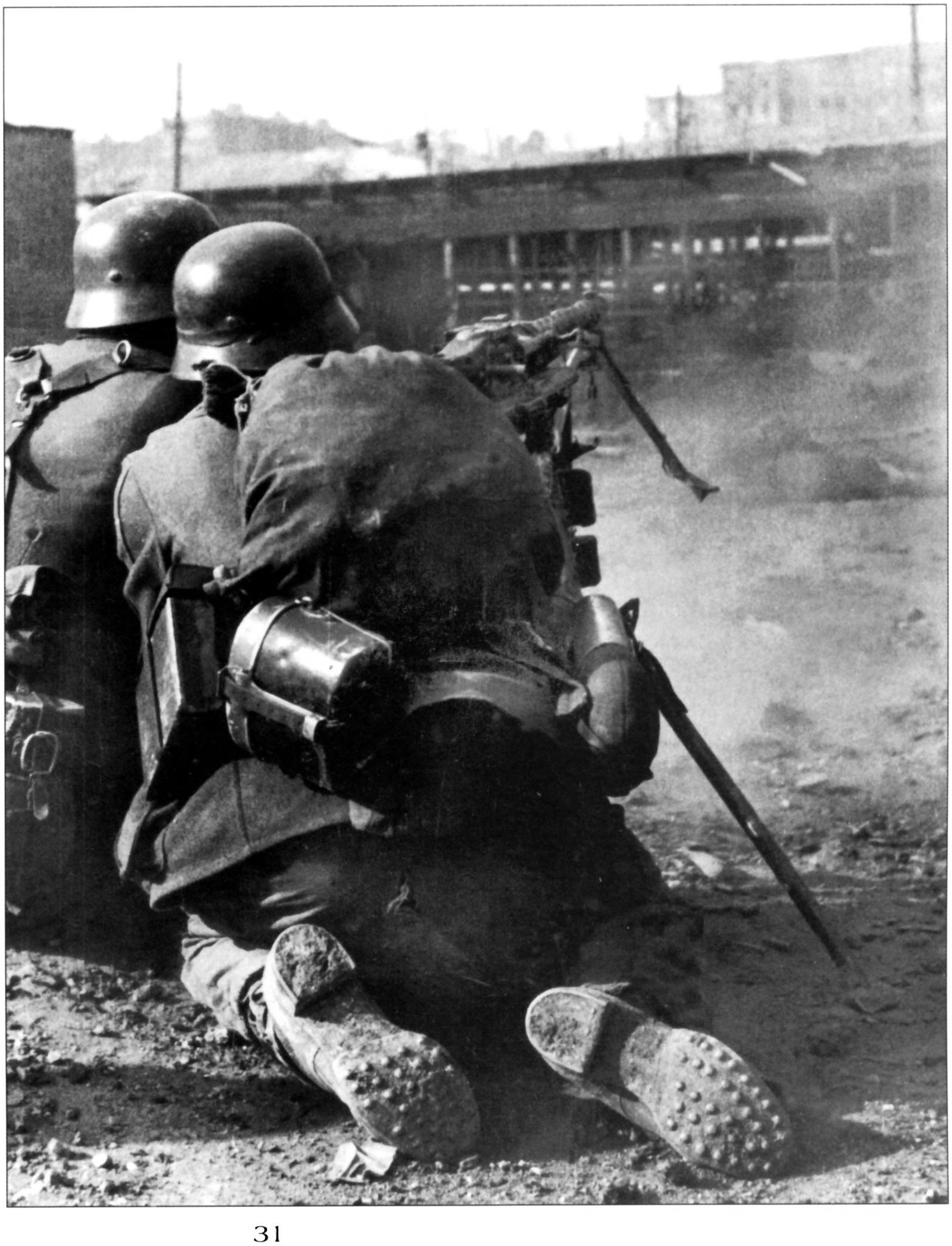
A Panzergrenadier takes cover behind a tank as his unit comes under heavy fire. Beyond him a Pz.Kpfw. III has also been brought to a halt. He carries a Klappspaten (folding spade) first issued in 1938, but it never did completely replace the rigid kleines Schanzzeug (small entrenching tool). The waterproof Tragbüchse für Gasmaske (carrying case for gas mask) was often used to stow cigarettes and matches resulting in it being called a Zigarettenbüchse (cigarette container). Socks, foot wraps, and writing materials were also carried in the container. This was a prohibited, but nonetheless widespread practice.



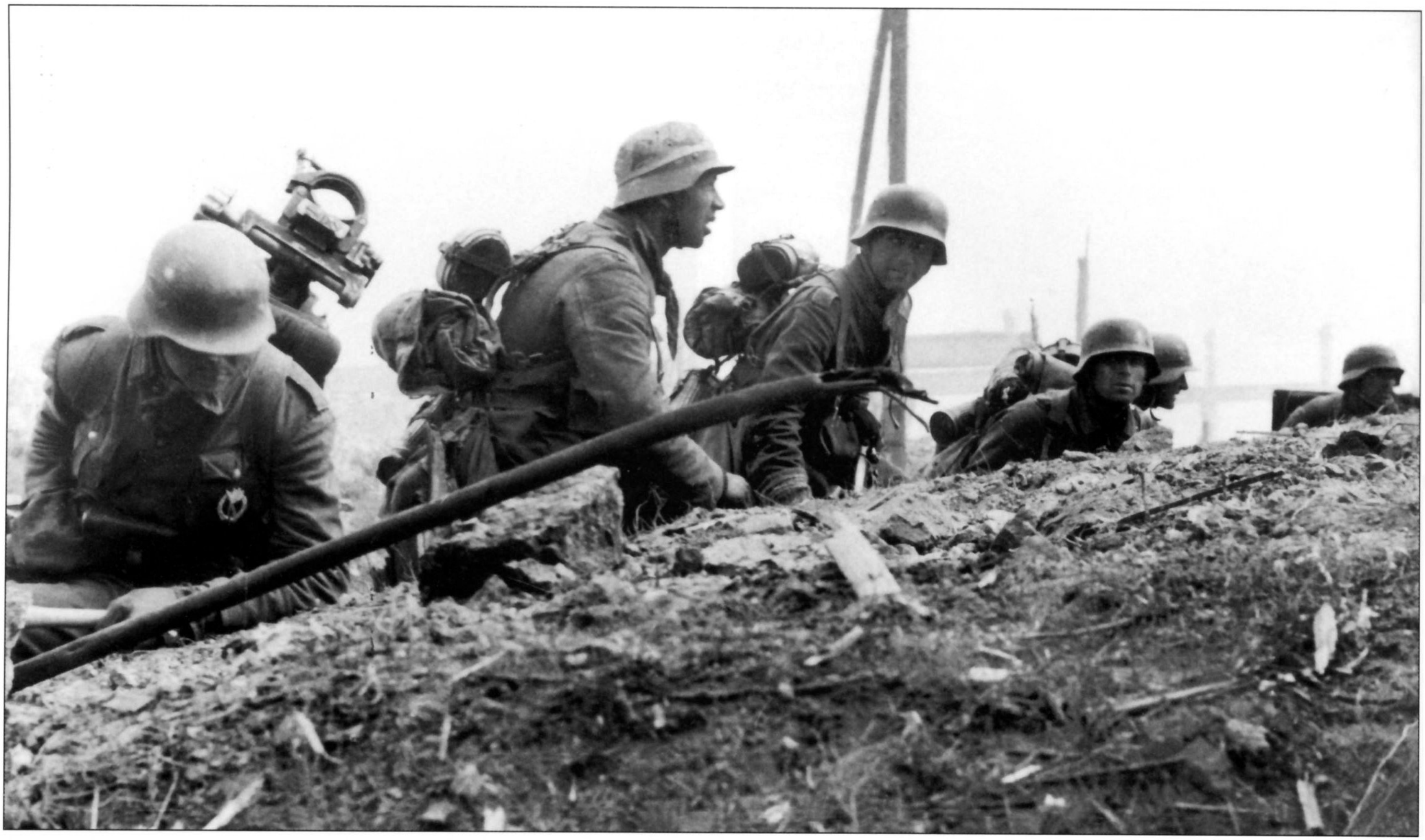
A rifleman rushes forward carrying extra machine gun ammunition. Running to evade fire was known as hinrotzen (literally "evading snot"). He is outfitted with typical infantry equipment, two 30-round cartridge pouches, S.84/98 sidearm (bayonet), entrenching tool, and Stg.24 stick hand grenade. Stick grenades were referred to as a Türklopfer (doorknocker), the same nickname the Soviets used, kolotushka. He carries a slung rifle, probably taken from a fallen Kamerad to prevent its recovery by the Soviets who were short of weapons. Spare weapons were also carried to replace damaged or malfunctioning weapons.



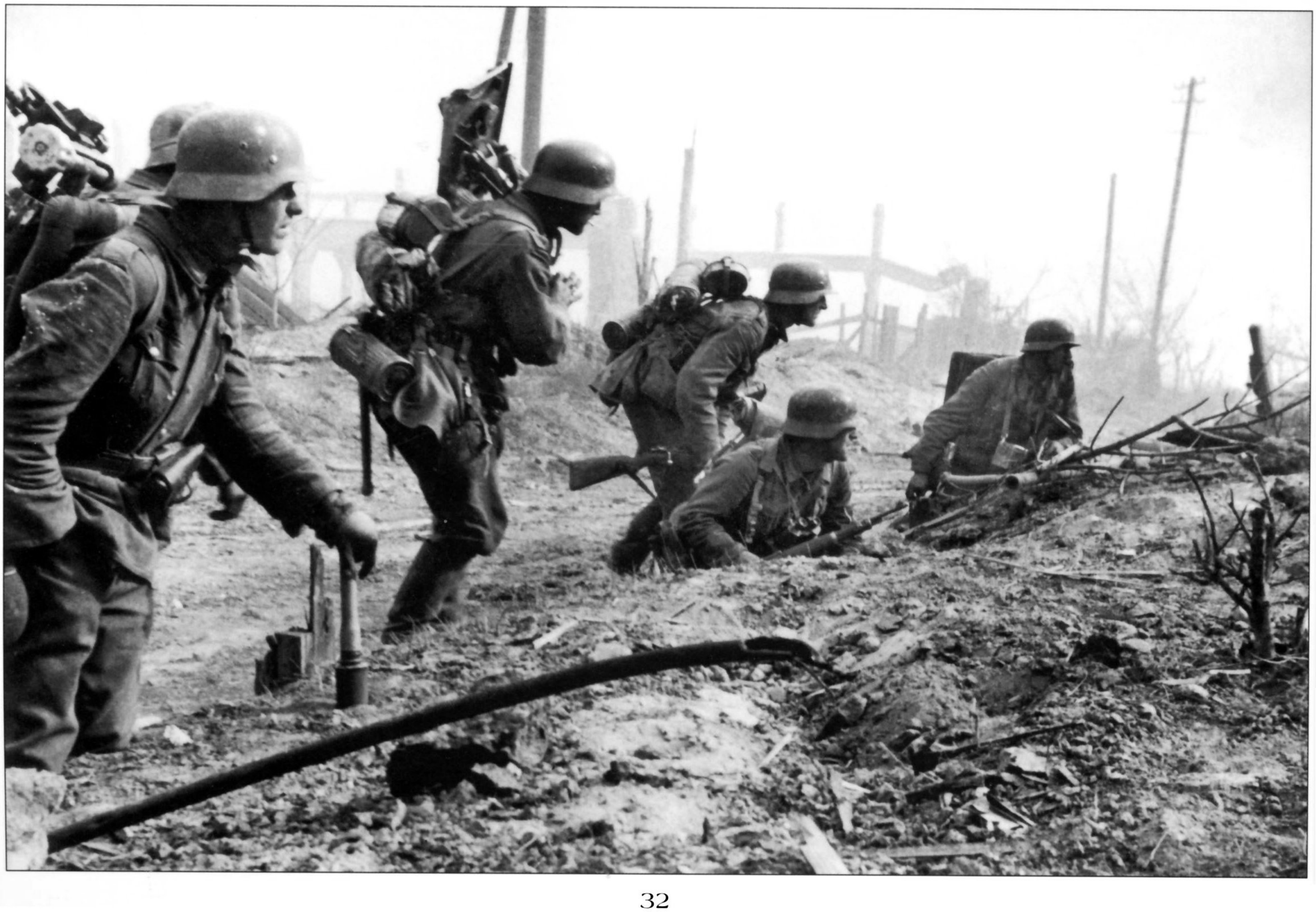
Two photographs depicting a 8.8cm FlaK 18 gun pounding a factory in the city's center delivering die Behandlung (the treatment). The Luftwaffe's 9. Flak-Division was attached to 6. Armee and its guns were mainly employed for direct fire support as the Soviet's attempted little high altitude bombing. The Flak-Division's 3.7cm and 2cm light FlaK were more useful against low-flying attack aircraft. Note the five Abschußringe (kill rings) on the limbered gun. With Stalingrad now split German guns could pour fire down streets from one end the other. Gunners set up fire points and roadblocks at the western end and then fought their way to the other. Nine-tenths of the city was in German hands by the end of September. The Soviets crossing the Volga were now being sent to the factory district where much of the heaviest fighting occurred.



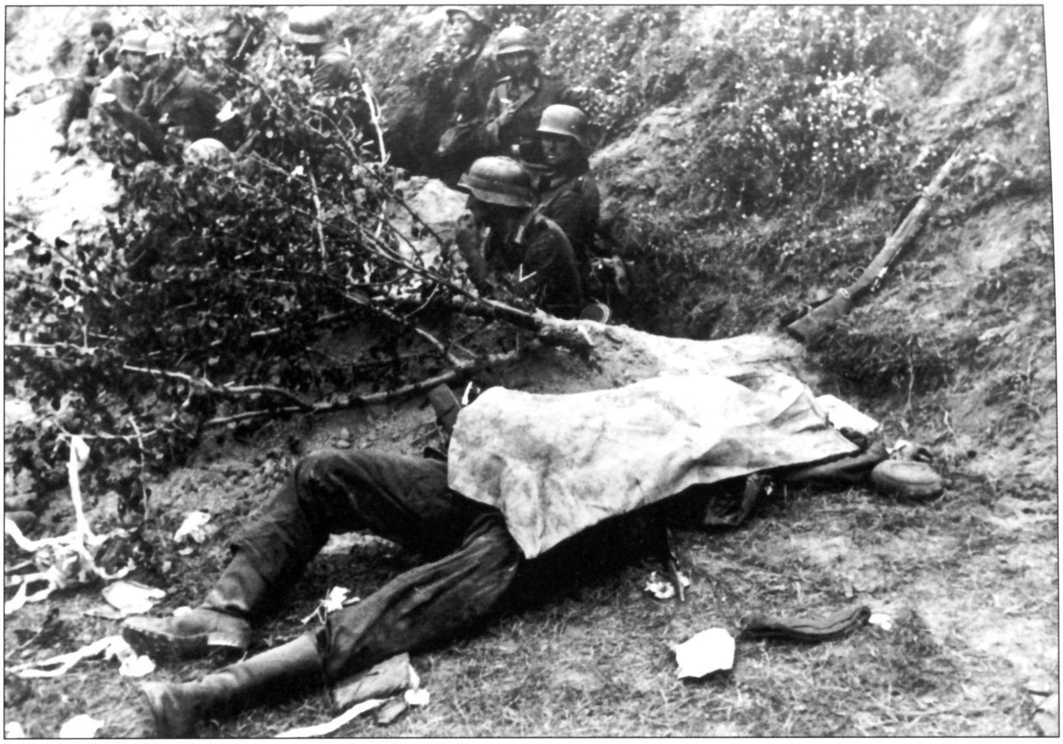
An MG-34 heavy machine gun pours fire into a distant factory building to suppress snipers, Klotzen—firing everything at a target. Snipers were a constant worry for the Germans as they inflicted significant casualties, forced all round security, tied down troops attempting to clear them, and effected morale. Läuse und Scharfschützen (lice and snipers) was a common phrase used by Landser to characterize Russia and was a general phrase for anything that was a nuisance. The gunner wears a crude sack-like rucksack.

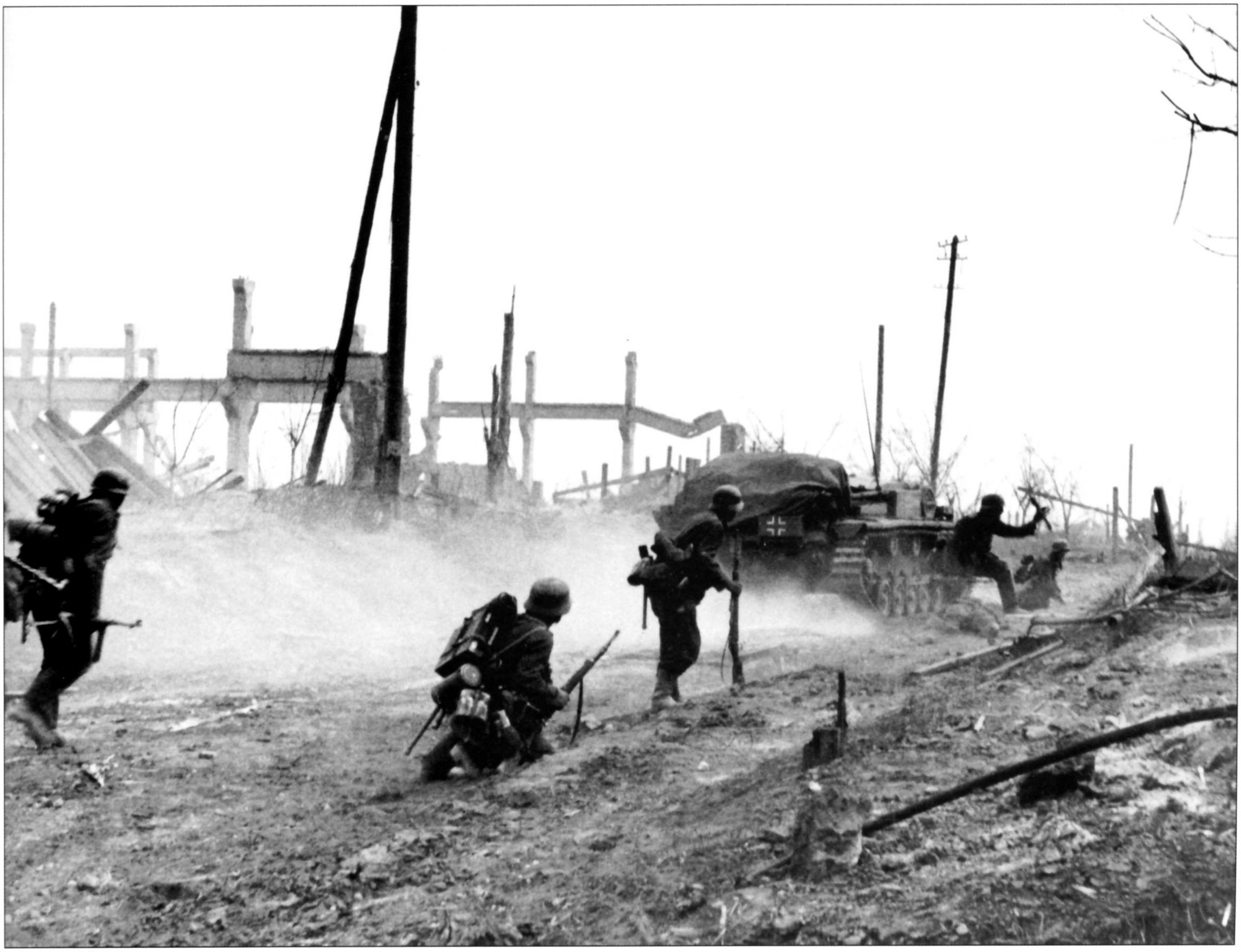


Two photographs taken in sequence showing a 8cm (actually 81mm) sGrW.34 heavy mortar group advances behind the rifle company they support. One of the men carries a 5cm leGrW.36 light mortar on his shoulder. An infantry battalion's machine gun company possessed a platoon of six 8cm mortars. Mortars were close behind the lead assault platoons to rapidly place fire on Soviet strongpoints and sudden counterattacks. They carried grenades to mop-up bypassed holdouts.



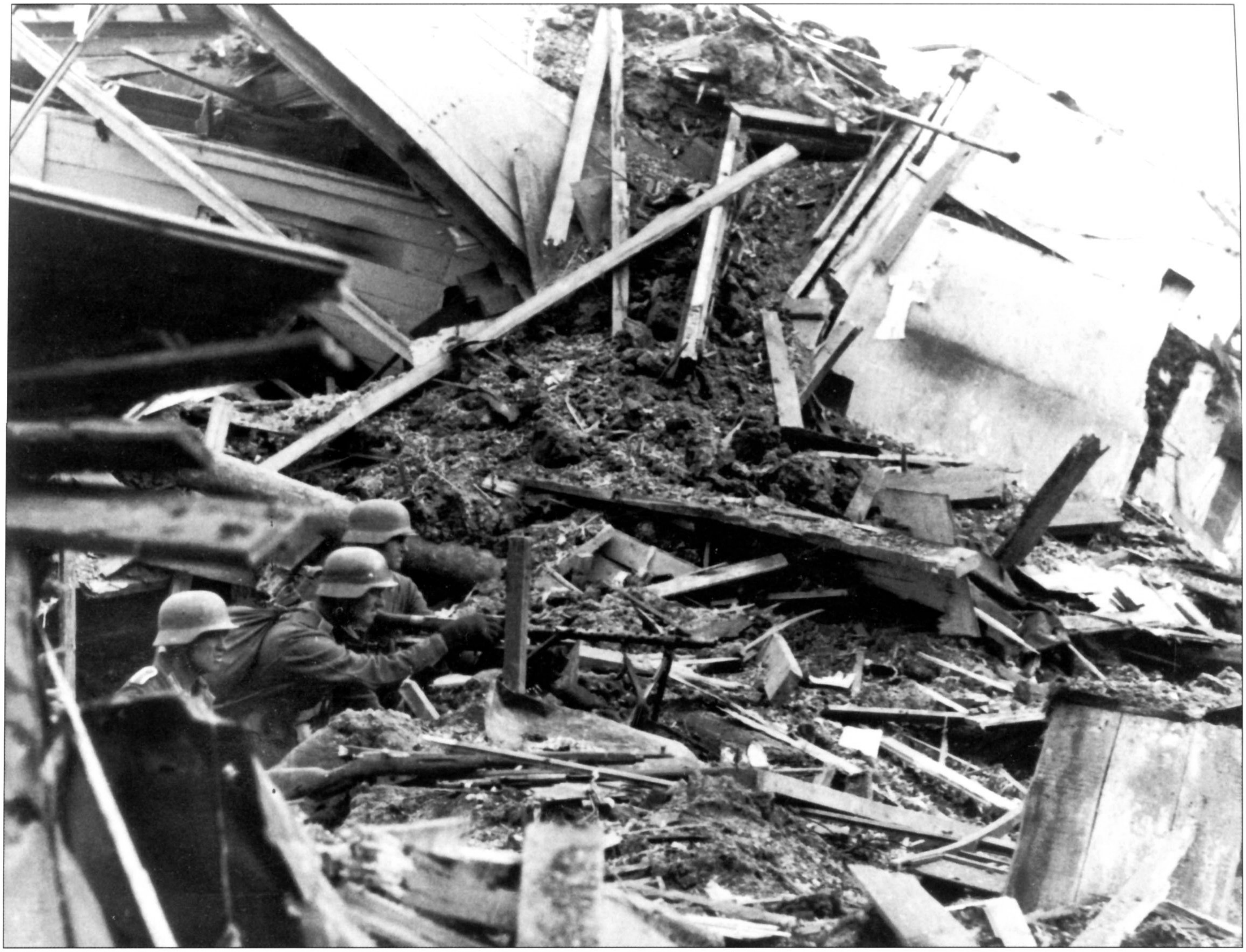
"Ich hatt' einen Kameraden" (I had a Comrade) is a song dating from 1809 and sung at soldiers' funerals and still sung to this day within the German armed forces. Scattered field dressings by his boots indicate the efforts made to save a Kamerad…dran sein (his time is up). A group of 389. Infanterie-Division troops await word to move out. By late September the 6. Armee had lost 7,700 soldiers killed and 31,000 wounded. Ten-percent of von Paulus's army had been lost, and still he was nowhere closer to clearing the city. The worst was still to come, the struggle for the industrial district.



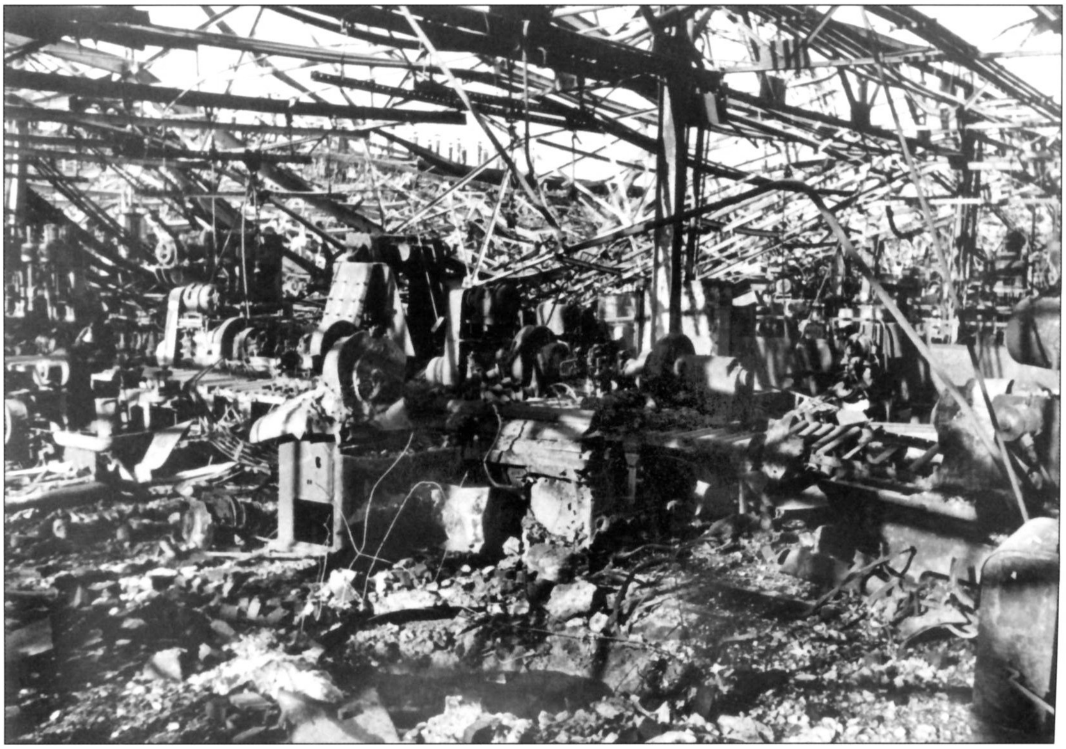


Supported by a StuG III 7.5cm assault gun, infantry of the 389. Infanterie-Division advance into the factory district, a main center of resistance. On 3 October the Germans attacked the Red October Tractor Factory with three infantry and two Panzer divisions on a three-mile front. The following day the tractor factory was attacked by elements of the 15. Panzer-Division, 60. Infanterie-Division (motorisiert), and 389. Infanterie-Division.

Three photographs depicting infantry of 389. Infanterie-Division cautiously moving through a ruined factory. During the battle for the Tractor Factory the Soviet 37th Guards Rifle Division was driven back, but they contested every meter of ground. Hand grenades were used extensively by both sides. By evening of 4 October these German troops had gained one block of flats in the factory apartment block. But still the Soviets would not give up. During the night they counterattacked the German positions with Katyusha rockets with considerable successes. For the next week bitter fighting raged. On 14 October, billed as "the final offensive," von Paulus sent five divisions supported by the Luftwaffe against the tractor factory. Throughout the day a bloody battle ensued around the factory and inside the workshops. In just one day in the area the Germans lost 40 tanks and 2,000 soldiers killed.

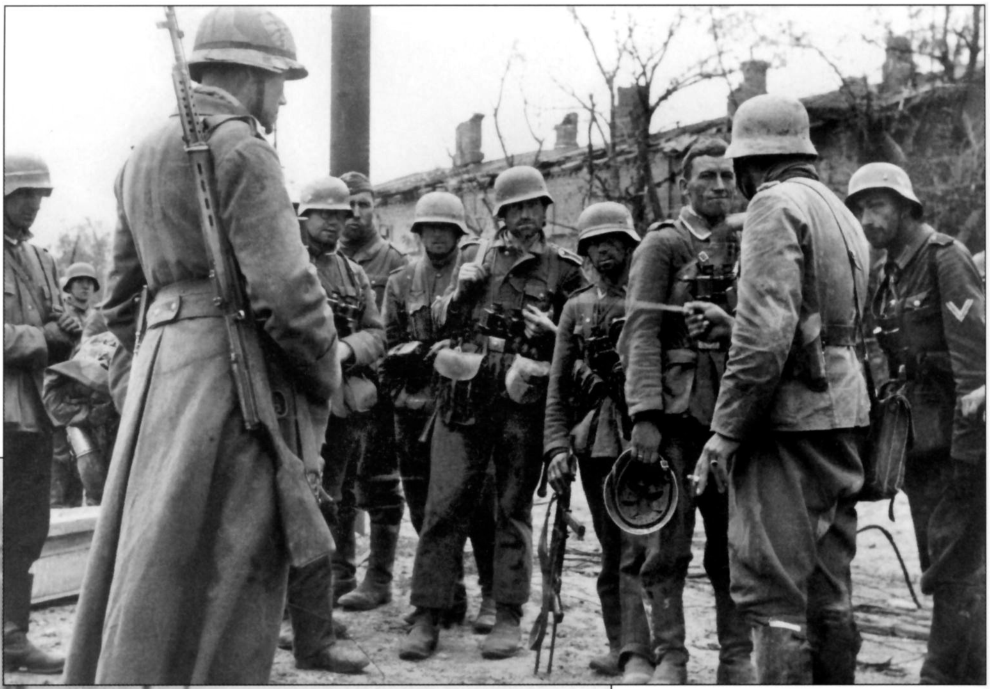


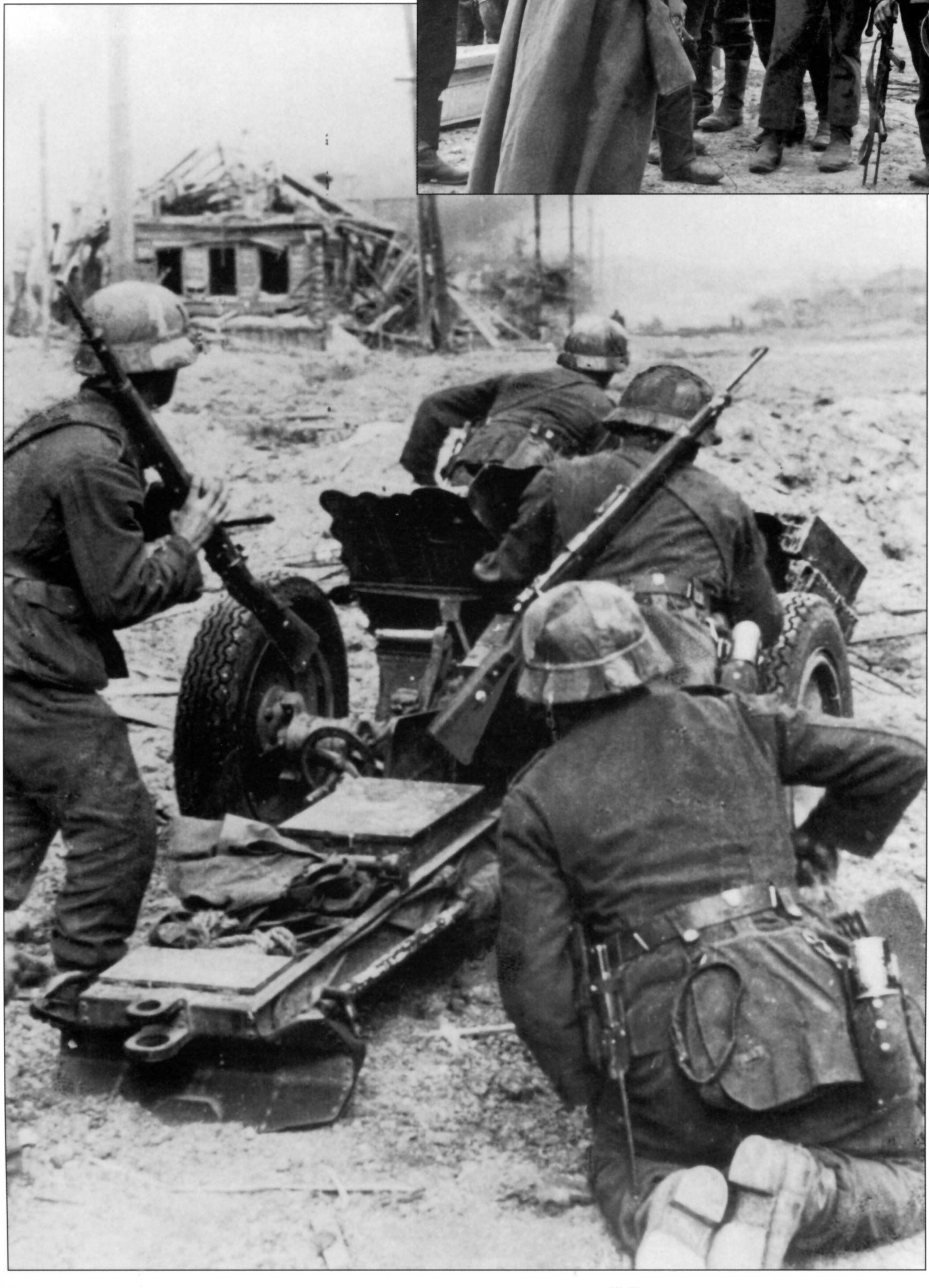
A machine gun nest inside the ruins of the tractor factory. The Unteroffizier is armed with a Soviet 7.62mm Mosin-Nagant M-1898/30 rifle, what the Germans called a Gew.252(r). The twisted and shattered ruins provided cover and concealment to attackers and defenders alike as protection from Post bekommen (receiving mail) meaning receiving artillery fire.



A picture of complete destruction. One of the ruined factories following the bitter fighting. Significant numbers of troops on both sides were injured by nail punctures, twisted ankles, injured knees and elbows, and falling debris. During mid October after the tanks had broken through the strong Soviet defenses, 389. Infanterie-Division moved into the 2-1/2-kilometer long hive of destroyed factory buildings and shops.

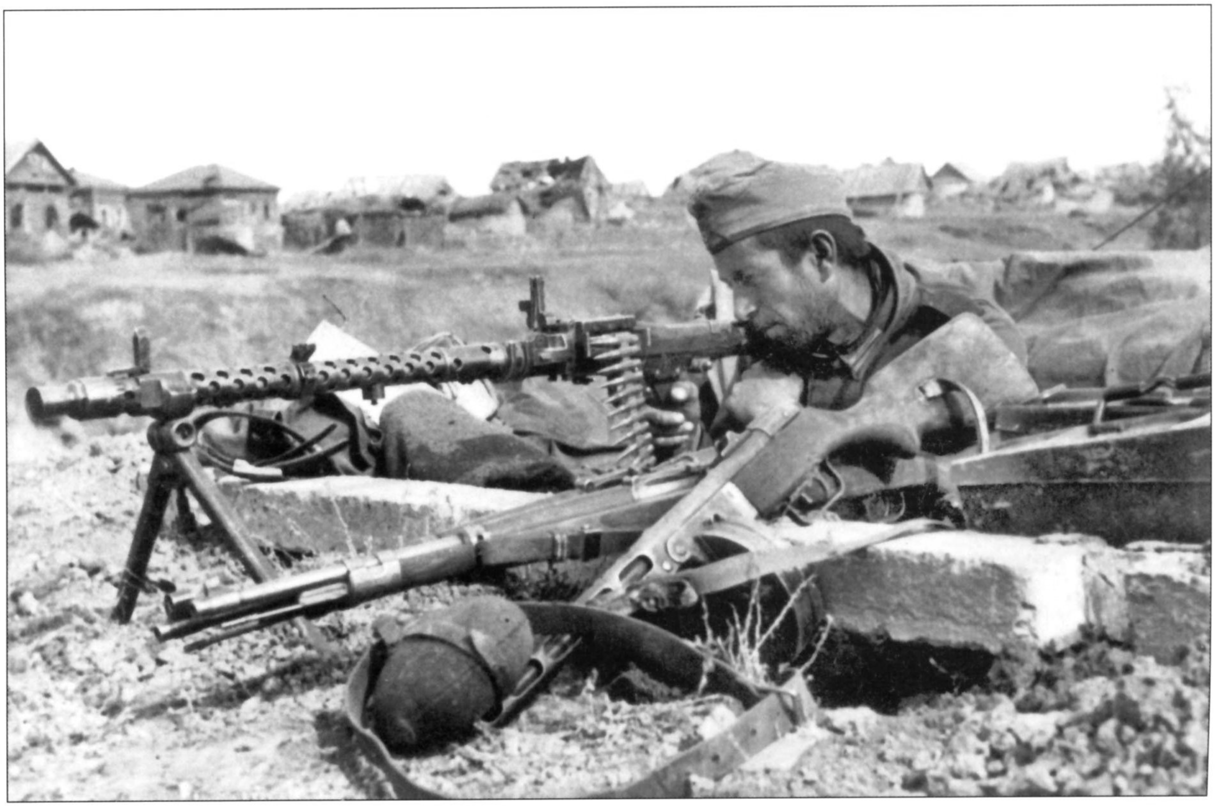
An officer, probably a Kompaniechef, of 389. Infanterie-Division issues orders to his troops during a pause in the fighting for the factories. With the high casualty rate junior NCOs were often leader platoons and Gefreiter leading groups. An NCO in the center holds a 9mm MP-40 submachine gun, known as a Kugelspritze (bullet-squirter). The soldier to the left carries a Soviet 7.62mm SVT-40 semi-automatic rifle, which the Germans designated the Sl.Gew.259(r).



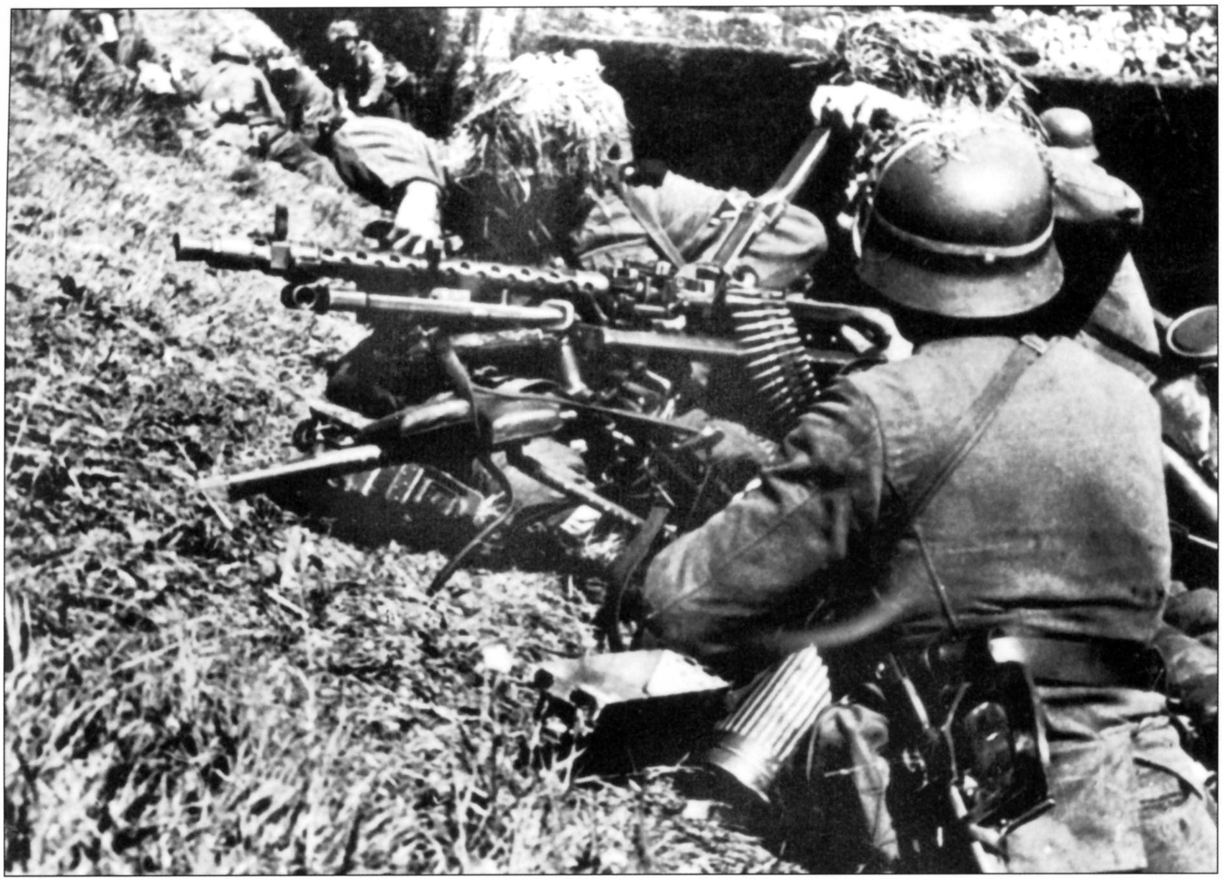


German infantry prepare to move a 7.5cm leIG.18 light infantry gun forward during a heavy exchange of fire. An infantry regiment's infantry gun company usually had four 7.5cm and two 15cm infantry guns. Note the scalloped shield that helped distort its shape making it more difficult to detect. An experienced gun crew were able to fire at least eight to twelve shells a minute. The crew are all wearing camouflage helmet covers made of salvaged Zeltbahn fabric.

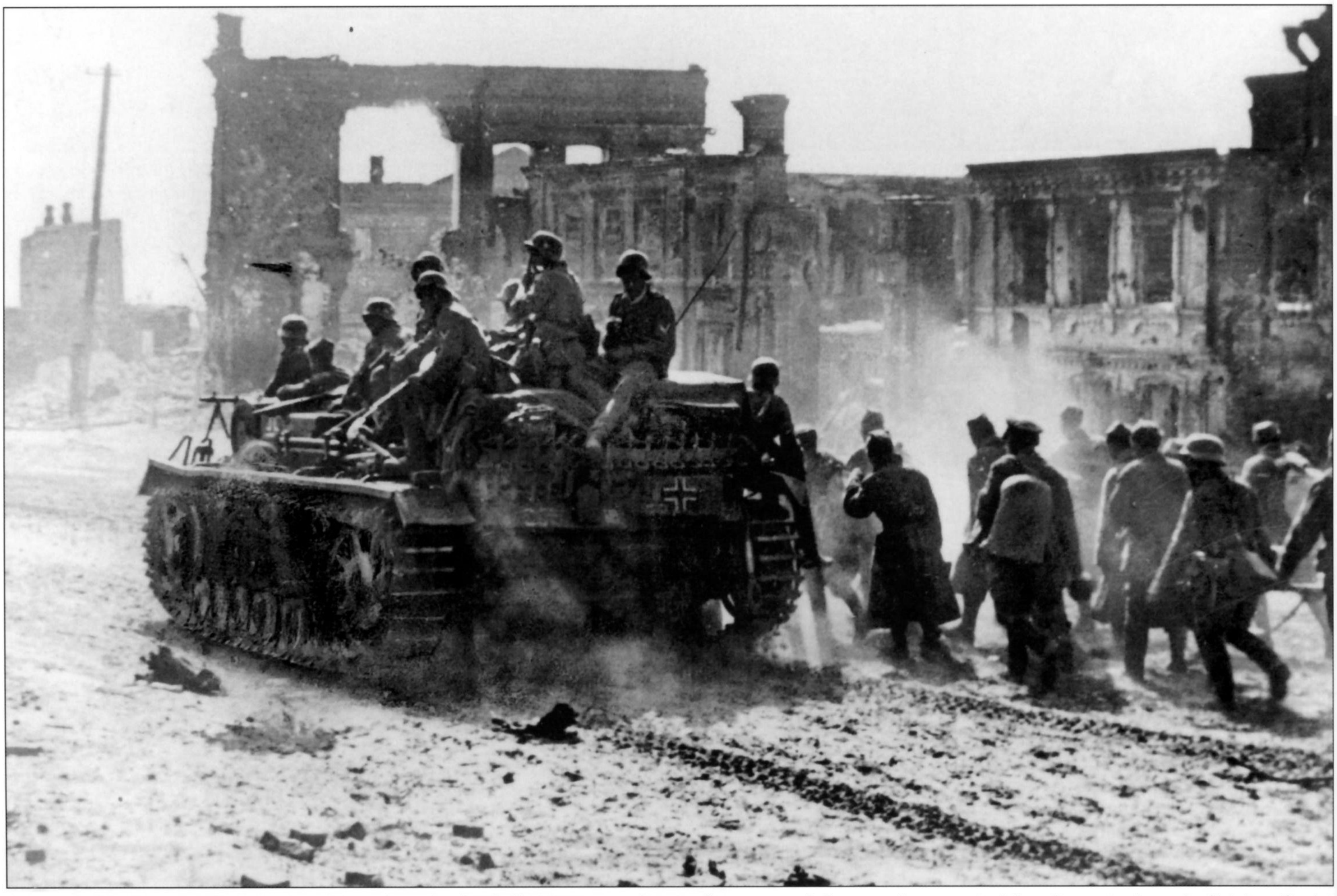
A heavy machine gun group covers infantrymen as they investigate a knocked out StuG III 7.5cm assault gun. It was common practice for troops to occupy knocked out vehicles and turning them into pillboxes. Armored vehicle crews were very reluctant to take their machines forward into built-up areas unless protected by infantrymen from close-in attack.



A soldier fires an MG-34 on the outskirts of the city amid a workers' housing area. On the edge of his position is a 7.92mm Mauser Kar.98k carbine, the standard Wehrmacht shoulder weapon. The Landser referred to it variously as a Gewehr (rifle, even though it was a carbine), Mauser Büchse (Büchse = container, but also an old term for a firearm), Mauser Karabiner, Flint (colloquialism for shotgun), or Knarre (colloquialism for rifle). He also possesses a 7.62mm PPSh-41 submachine gun.

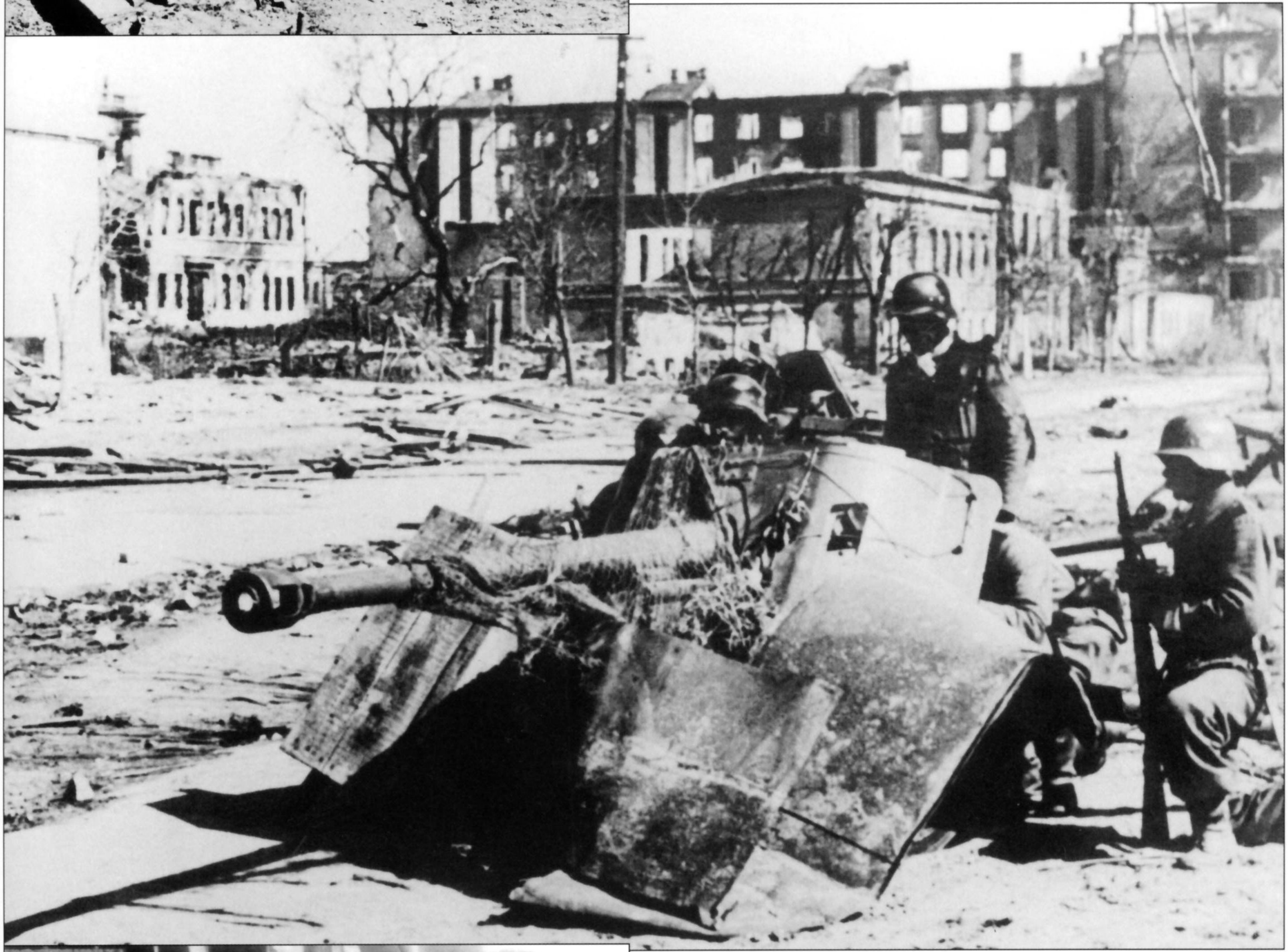


An MG-4 heavy machine gun group brings its gun into action in one of the city's suburbs. The infantry battalion's machine gun company had two heavy machine gun platoons, each with four guns. On open terrain they would protect the flanks of advancing rifle companies, place long-range suppressive fire through gaps between units, or deliver overhead fire on enemy positions. It built-up areas they had to operate forward with the rifle platoons, often as light machine guns with bipods only, but could still sometimes be positioned to take advantage of their accurate long-range fire.



A group of Panzergrenadiere hitch a ride on board a StuG III 7.5cm assault gun after successfully capturing a part of the city center in early October. Soviet prisoners are herded forward to clear rubble, recover bodies, and remove mines, booby traps and dud munitions. The city was covered with a layer of fine dust from explosives-churned ground, masonry mortar, and ash. When it rained this turned into a slimy mud.

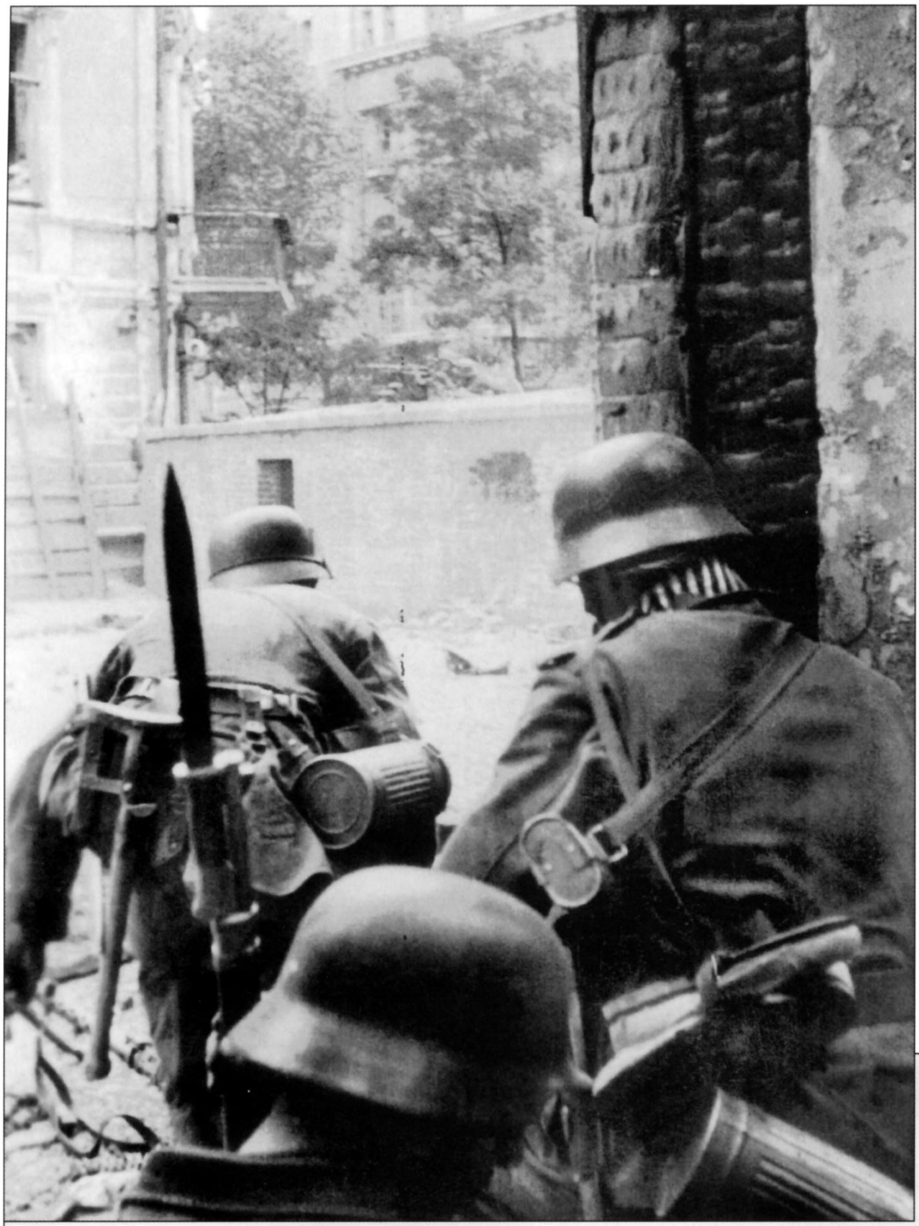
Two soldiers cross through the captured city center. Among these ruins every battle had been fought separately between individuals, often across the street, where the contestants fought-hand-to-hand duels among the strewn rubble and burning buildings. The Russians changed their tactics here using small, heavily armed storm groups to carry out lightening attacks on buildings and strongpoints.



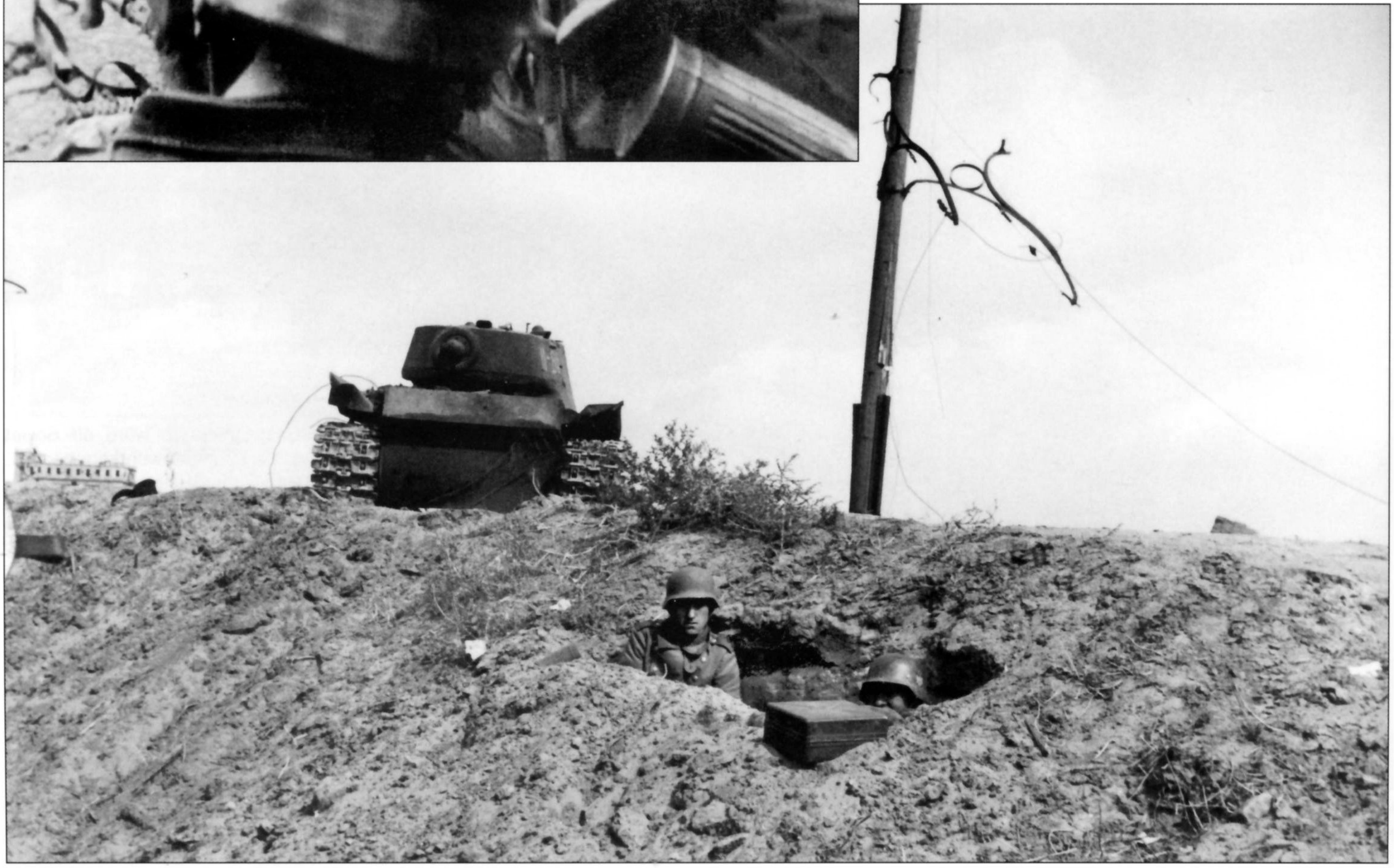
A 5cm PaK 38 antitank gun crew covers a street to ward off Soviet counterattacks. Officially such a position was a Panzerabwehrkanonennest (antitank gun nest), but the Landser simply called it a Paknest. The infantry regiment's antitank company had three platoons each with four PaKs. The 3.7cm PaK 35/36 had largely been replaced by the 5cm PaK 38 as it had proved ineffective against Soviet KV-1s and T-34s.

Inside a shattered building a machine gunner fires on enemy positions hidden on the other side of the street. German soldiers would spend whole days clearing a street, from one end to the other only find that Soviets had reoccupied some building during the night. This close-quarter fighting in the ruined houses, apartment buildings, factories, cellars, and sewers was soon nicknamed by the Landser as the Rattenkrieg (rat's war).

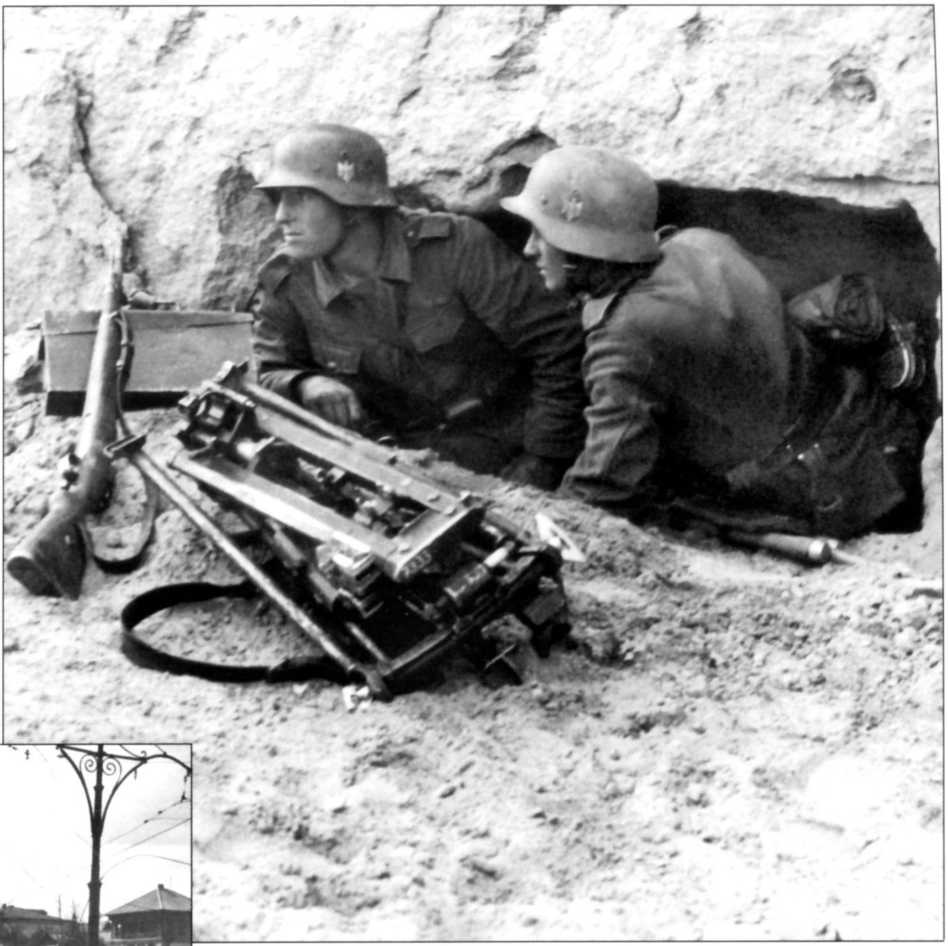
An MG-34 group is about to leave its cover and make a run for another position during a fierce firefight. The S.84/98 Bajonett—a term rarely used, was officially referred to as a Seitengewehr (sidearm). In English this generally refers to a handgun. In the Wehrmacht its meaning was restricted to a bayonet. In German, handguns are collectively referred to as Handwaffen (hand weapons) or Handfeuerwaffen (hand firearms).



A knocked-out Soviet KV-1 tank (Klimenti Voroshilov) rests behind a slit trench on the outskirts of the city. A number of these heavy tanks were used in the battle. Armed with a 76.2mm gun and three 7.62mm machine guns, this heavily armored beast was an effective weapon. However, it stood little chance against the 5cm PaK 38 at close-range. The Landser called what was officially known as a Schützenloch (rifleman's hole or firing hole) a Wolfgrabhügel (wolf's barrow) analogous to a foxhole.

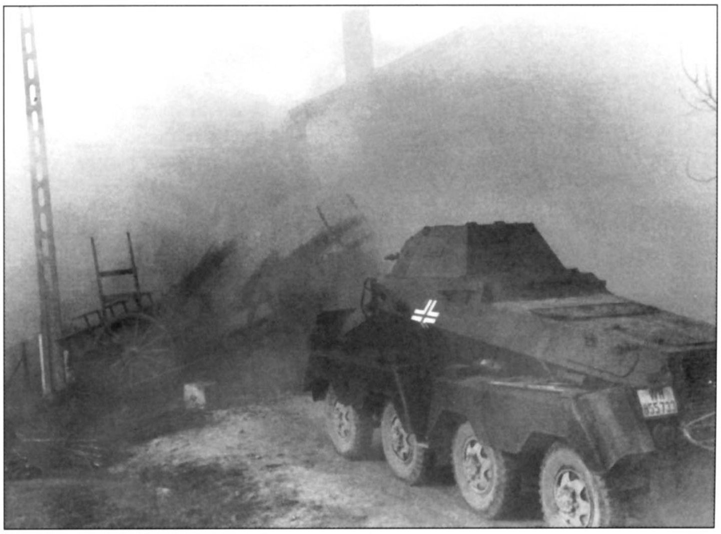


The bluffs overlooking the Volga were coursed with gullies and ravines. The Landser adopted the Russian word "balka" to describe them. The sandy soil allowed Unterschlupfe (dugouts) to easily be cut into their sides, what the Landser called a Wohnbunker (dwelling bunker). Here part of a heavy machine gun group watches action over their folded Lafatte 34 (tripod mount).



Infantry move up in support through the ruins of the outskirts of the city. Although this area of Stalingrad had been captured, moving through it was still dangerous. A great many of the approaches into the city were still heavily mined and snipers and sappers would lay in wait. Soviet sappers would ambush tanks by charging out in groups and drop mines in front of tanks, toss demolition charges on engine decks, attach captured German magnetic hand mines, or throw Molotov cocktails. The Russians called this a "bottle with flammable mixture" (Butylka s goryuchej smes' yu) as it was not "politically correct" to make light of their leaders' names.

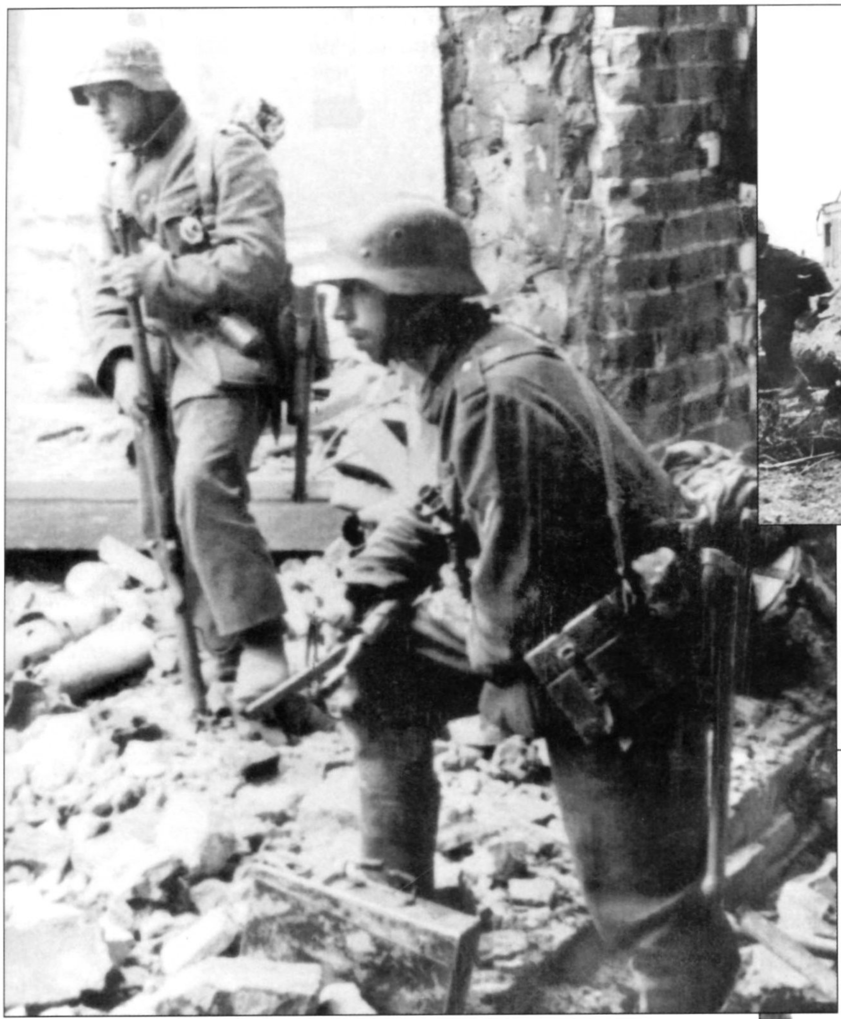
Buildings are set ablaze at night during a Soviet air raid in late October. Russian aircraft were now dominating the night sky over the city, much to the astonishment of the Germans. Because of these constant air attacks soldiers got little rest. Consequently, casualties began to rise along with fatigue, while morale among the men fell to an all time low. The Germans called combat fatigue Kriegsneurose (war neurosis). A Landser suffering severe shellshock or fatigue might be said to be Hirnverletzt (touched in the head).



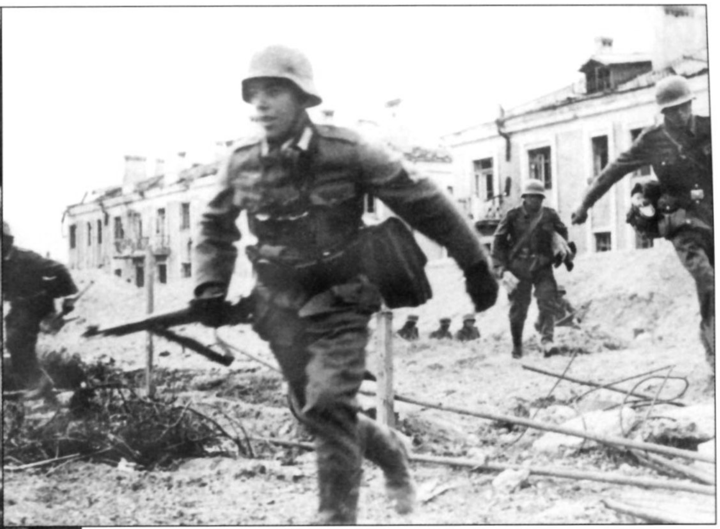
A 2cm cannon-armed Sd.Kfz.231 weapons carrier armored reconnaissance car is halted by a hasty barricade on one of the many narrow streets tracing through the city. This particular vehicle is painted in the dark gray base with a camouflage pattern of dark sand sprayed over it. These vehicles were issued to the reconnaissance battalion of motorized infantry and Panzer divisions.

Three photographs taken in sequence showing a officer (wearing eyeglasses and camouflaging cloth covers on his silver shoulder boards) with his infantry assault group sheltering behind a factory building wall in the northern part of the city. One can see the caution they are undertaking and that they are seriously searching for signs of the enemy before exposing themselves. They are armed with the rifle group's standard weapons: 7.92mm Kar.98k carbine, 7.92mm MG-34 light machine gun, 9mm MP-40 submachine gun, and Stg.24 stick hand grenade. The Stahlhelm 35 (steel helmet M1935), some with cloth camouflage covers, carried various nicknames to include: Helm (helmet), Blechhut (tin-hat), Hurratüte, and Parteihut (both mean party hat).

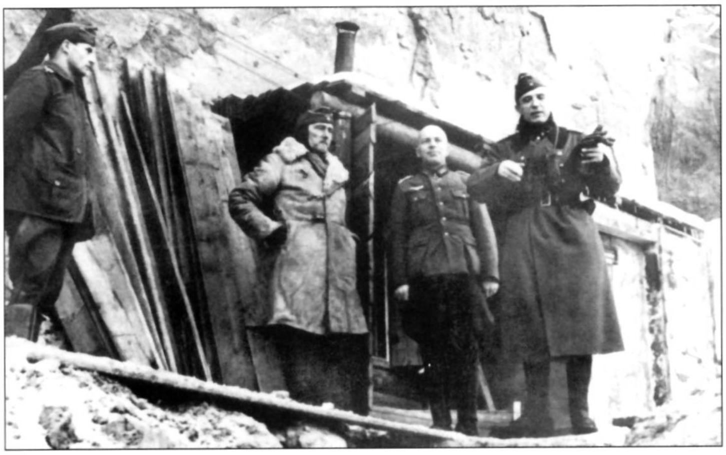
A dejected column of German prisoners captured on the Stalingrad Front pass a group of Russian peasants. By this period of the battle the Red Army was slowly closing their mighty jaws around Stalingrad. The 6. Armee and its allies were now swamped in a sea of death and fire.



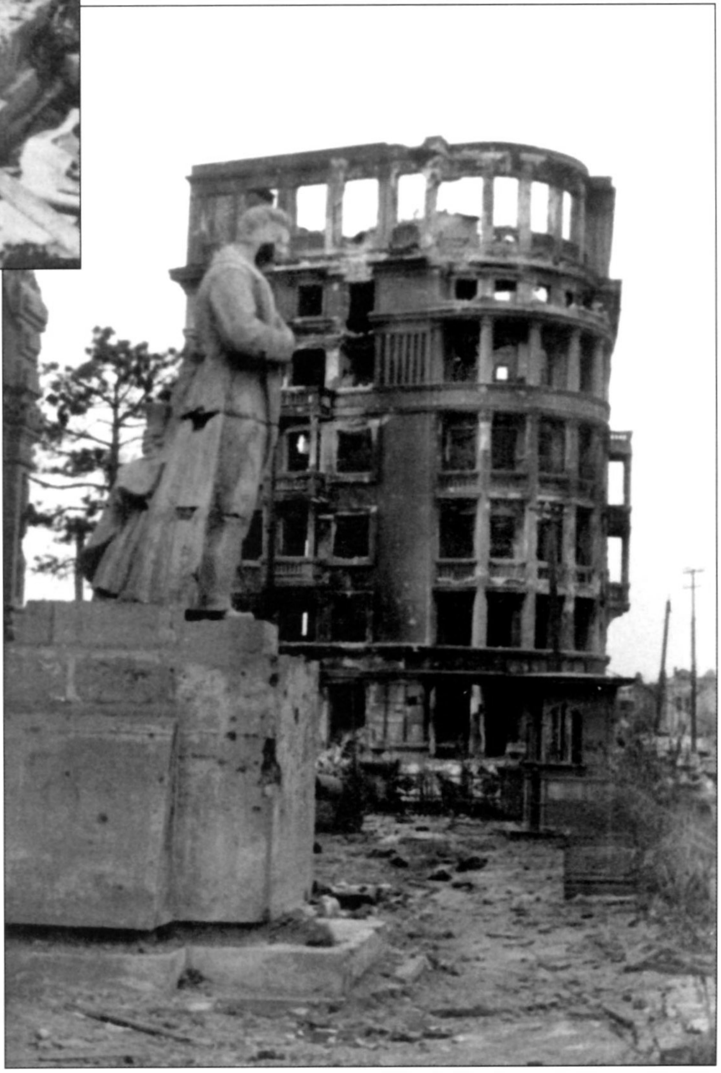
Two soldiers one armed with a Kar.98k and the other with an MP-40. The soldier with the rifle is also armed with stick grenades thrust in his belt and one attached to his entrenching tool carrier. His helmet is covered with chicken wire mesh. This photograph was taken in late October. During this period it had been warm and rainy, but then, as the last days of October passed away, the temperatures began to sink below freezing point. The autumn rains brought the Rasputitza (Russian for "big mud"). Although these two soldiers are still wearing their summer uniforms, the Reich were making an immense effort to protect its soldiers from the implacable hostility of the Russian winter. A supply chain stretching through occupied Russia, Poland, and back to the Reich were preparing to issue winter clothing to the troops.



An attack in progress, men from 113. Infanterie-Division advance from a trench armed. Using this short-handled folding shovel inside the city was a constant preoccupation for the soldiers. Exhausted after long period of relentless fighting, starving, and low on ammunition and fuel, they had no choice but to fight on.

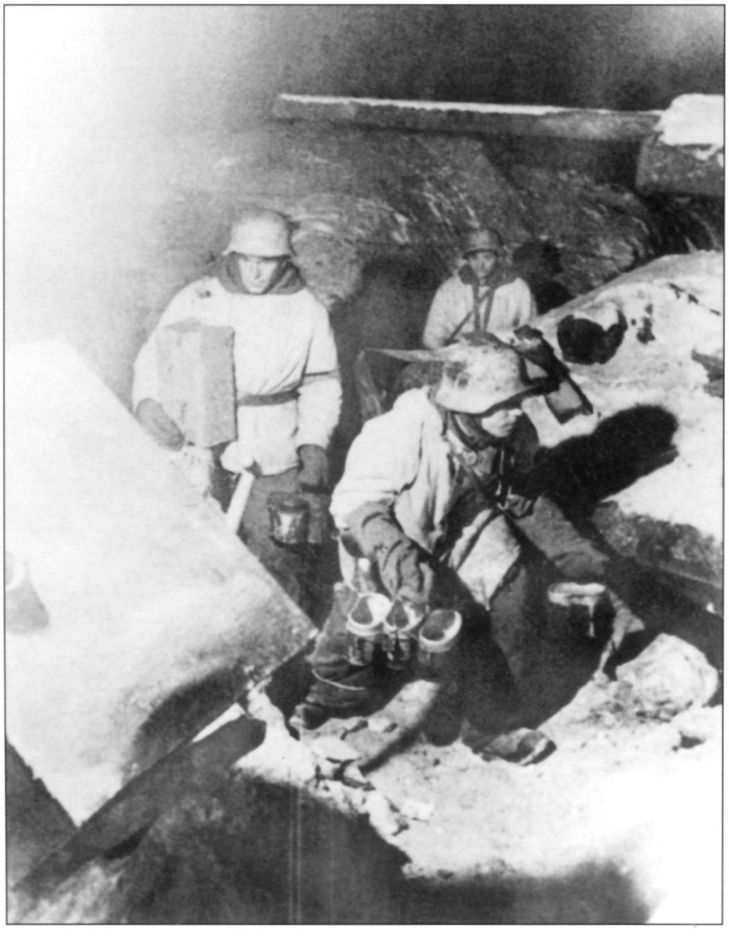


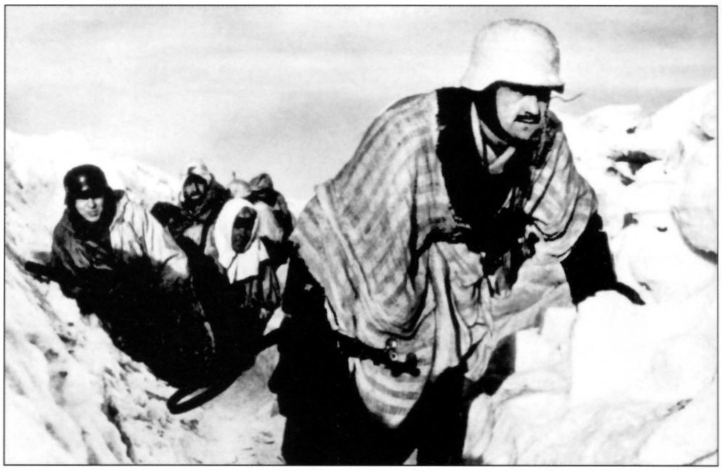
German officers pose in front of their command post, which was set up in a tunnel overlooking the banks of the frozen Volga. The Landser referred to them as Bronzen (bronze)—commanders and staff. Months earlier the Red Army probably occupied this command post. The weather is getting colder as evident by their clothing, left to right: mountain troops wind jacket, fur-lined leather great coat, standard tunic, and standard greatcoat. The officer wearing the tunic displays a Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes (Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross), known as the Blechkrawatte (tin-necktie).



A picture showing the devastation to a building that was captured by 389. Infanterie-Division at the end of October. By early November the city had been completely blasted to the ground by the fighting. Although the Russians had been pulverized into a few remaining pockets of resistance, they would not surrender and they still funneled troops into den Kessel (cauldron).

To increase 6. Armee's flagging momentum, the winter began to add a new dimension to the horrific conditions that the soldiers had to endure. Here a group of soldiers try to keep warm around a camp fire. They are all wearing the field gray wool Dienstmantel (service greatcoat) known simply as the Mantel.



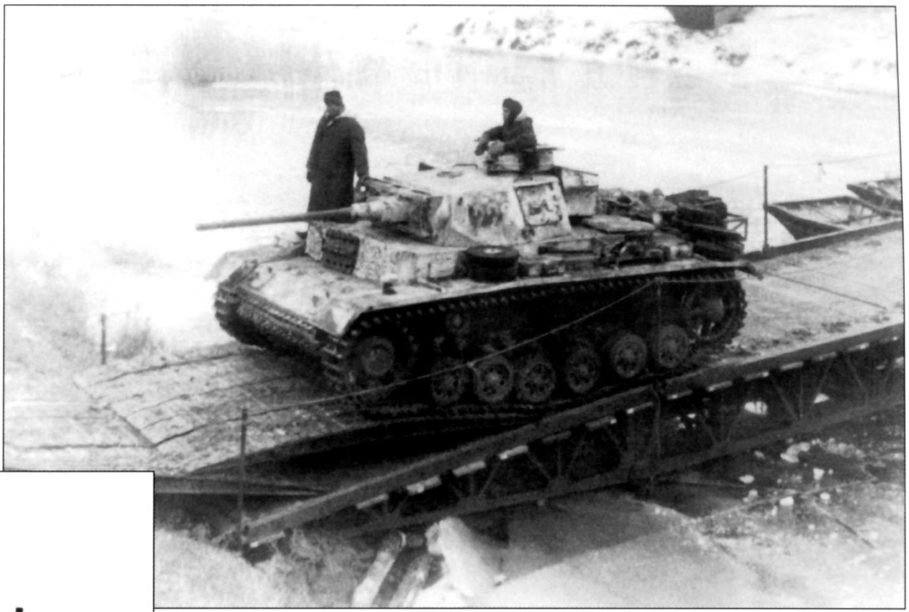


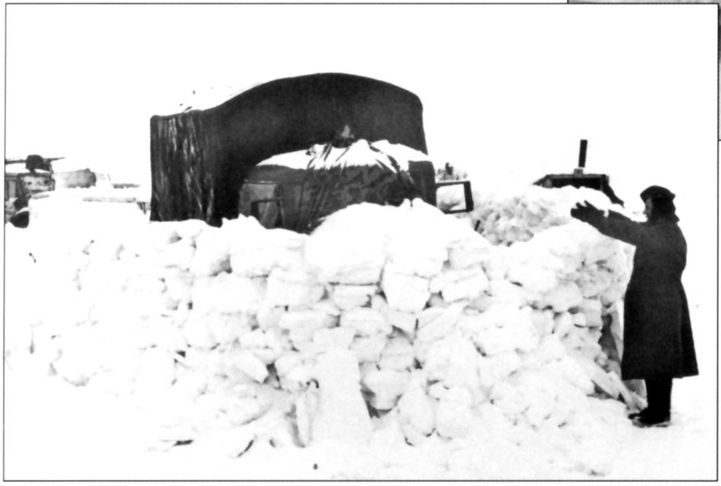
This scene vividly illustrates the lack of proper winter clothing. There was not always enough to go around. Any kind of fabric was used to provide laying, here what appears to be a window curtain or table cloth. This type of protection was totally inadequate though. Some of the others have fastened white cloth over their helmets.

A machine gunner wearing a single white camouflage garment wades through the snow with an MG-34 over his shoulder. The freezing temperatures on the Ostfront (East Front) can well be imagined, and it was a matter of life and death to supply combat troops with adequate protective clothing. Some units fabricated makeshift snow camouflage clothing from bed sheets.

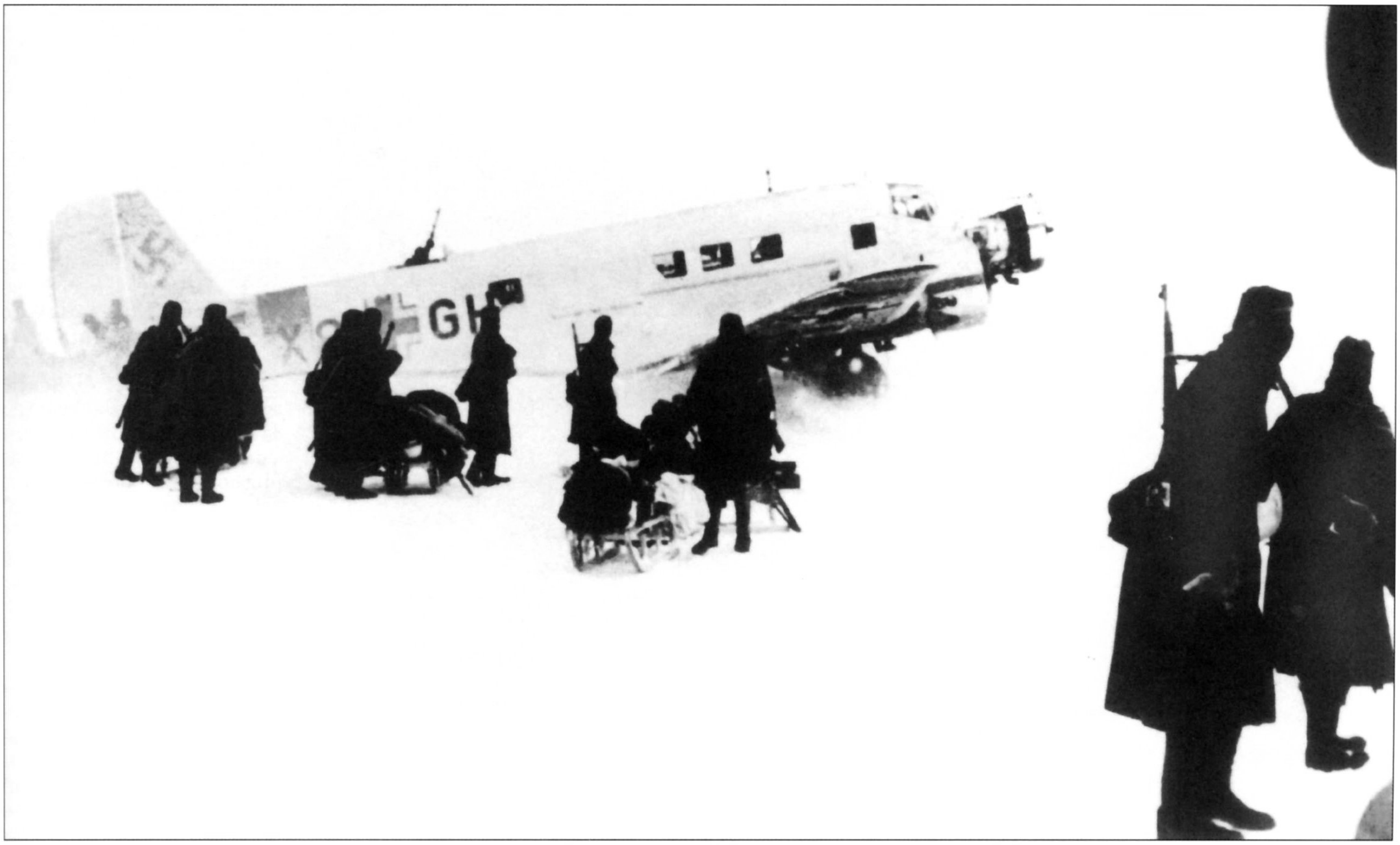
A Panzergrenadier ration detail, probably carry Frontkameradensuppe (front comrades soup) in the mess tins, a stew of beans, potatoes, and ham—"the comrades." They are wearing reversible gray/white insulated winter suits issued in preparation for the coming winter. Such uniforms were not available for the brutal 1941/42 winter where so many Landser suffered. The heavy felt and leather boots were considered superior to the Soviet felt boots on which they were modeled. However, these soldiers do not appear to have proper mittens and are using either old socks or rags wrapped around their hands to avoid frostbite. Their steel helmets have been whitewashed.

A Pz.Kpfw. III Ausf. J crosses a pontoon bridge on the outskirts of the city in late November. The tank's tactical marking is "222" indicating it is the 2nd Platoon, 2nd company, 2nd tank within its Panzer-Regiment. The vehicle has received its whitewash winter camouflage. Both crew members are wearing reversible animal skin fur coats which were issued for use to troops driving vehicles or on guard duties on the Eastern Front during the winter. This was known as a Steppenmantel (steppe greatcoat).

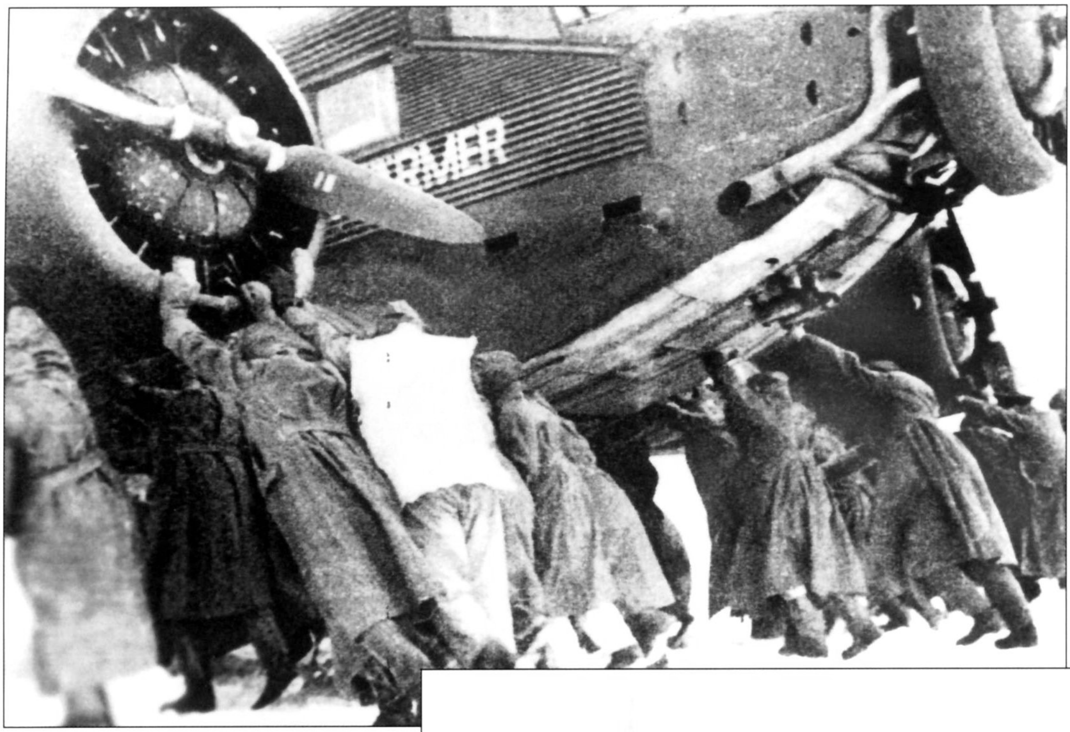




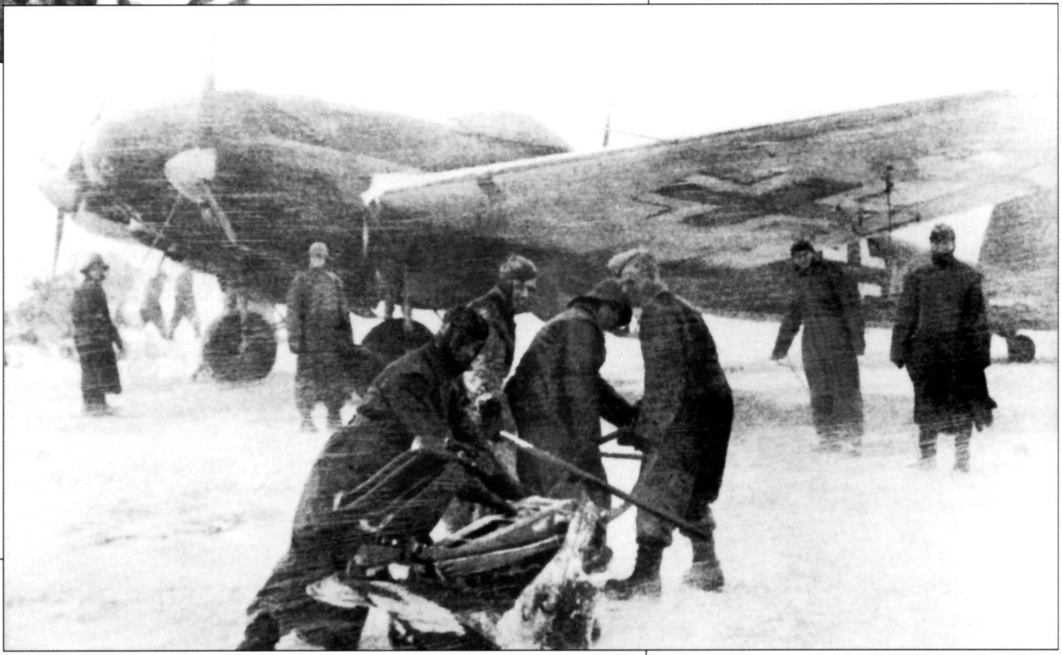
The harsh reality of winter on the Eastern Front. A soldier builds igloo-style snow-block walls around an Opel "Blitz" cargo truck to protect it engine from the powerful icy winds bringing sub-zero temperatures. The wall also provided some protection from shell fragments and a place out of the direct wind for the driver and other unit personnel. At some parts of the front the daytime temperatures fell to 40-degrees Fahrenheit below zero. The cold was so bad that weapon actions froze, vehicles would not start for the battery plates were warped, cylinder blocks cracked, or crankshafts and axles refused to turn. Precious gasoline would have to be burned beneath engines in pans to thaw out engines. To make matters worse insufficient supplies were reaching the men inside the doomed city. Consequently, many soldiers were without adequate winter clothing which exposed thousands of the men to the dangers of frostbit and freezing to death.



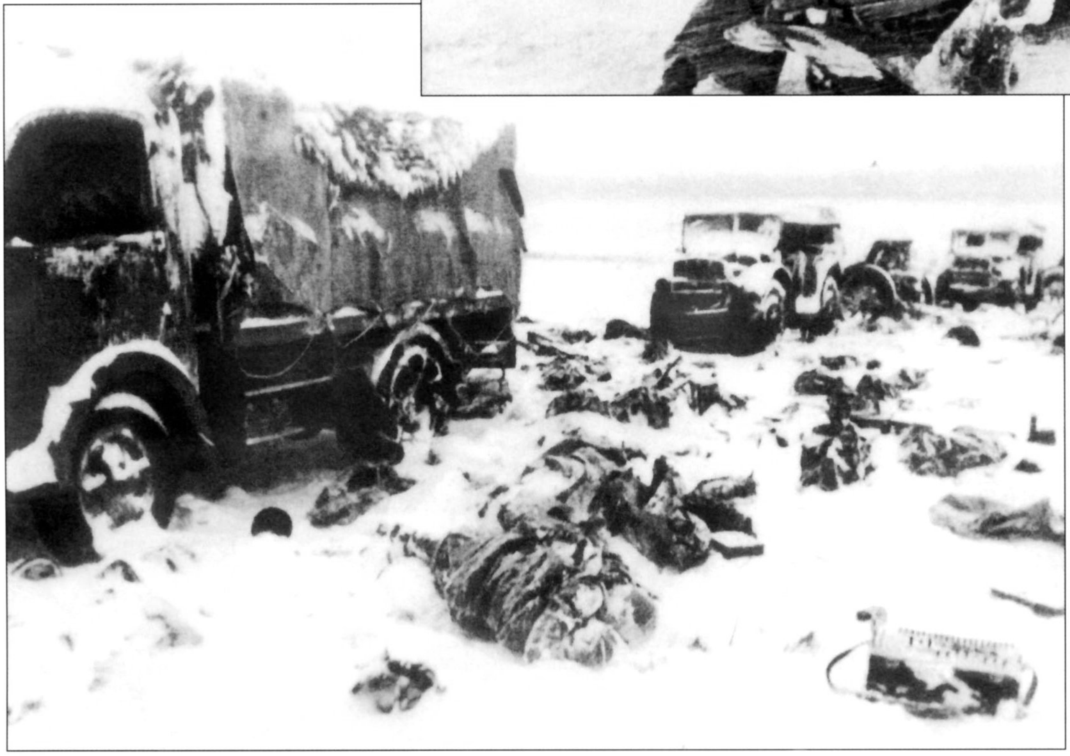
A Junkers Ju 52 transport preparing to depart for Stalingrad. By the evening of 23 November battle-fatigued divisions of 6. Armee became trapped in and around the fire-blackened ruins of the doomed city. General Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen's Luftflotte IV was given the responsibility for supplying the dying 6. Armee by means of an arduous air-lift. Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring assured Hitler that the Luftwaffe could keep beleaguered Stalingrad supplied.



Troops push a Ju 52 transport plane loaded with supplies for Stalingrad to the airstrip, after it had become stuck in a snowstorm. The Luftwaffe made the effort using Ju 52 transports, known as the Tante Ju (Aunt Ju), Alte eiserne Tante (Old Iron Aunt), or Judula (Julia). They had been given the impossible task of supplying 6. Armee with 500 tons of supplies per day.



A Heinkel He 111 bomber is being loaded with supplies for the doomed 6. Armee. All available aircraft including other types of bombers were employed. Hundreds of aircraft would be needed and they were not available. Fuel shortages and the worsening weather counter the futile air-supply effort.

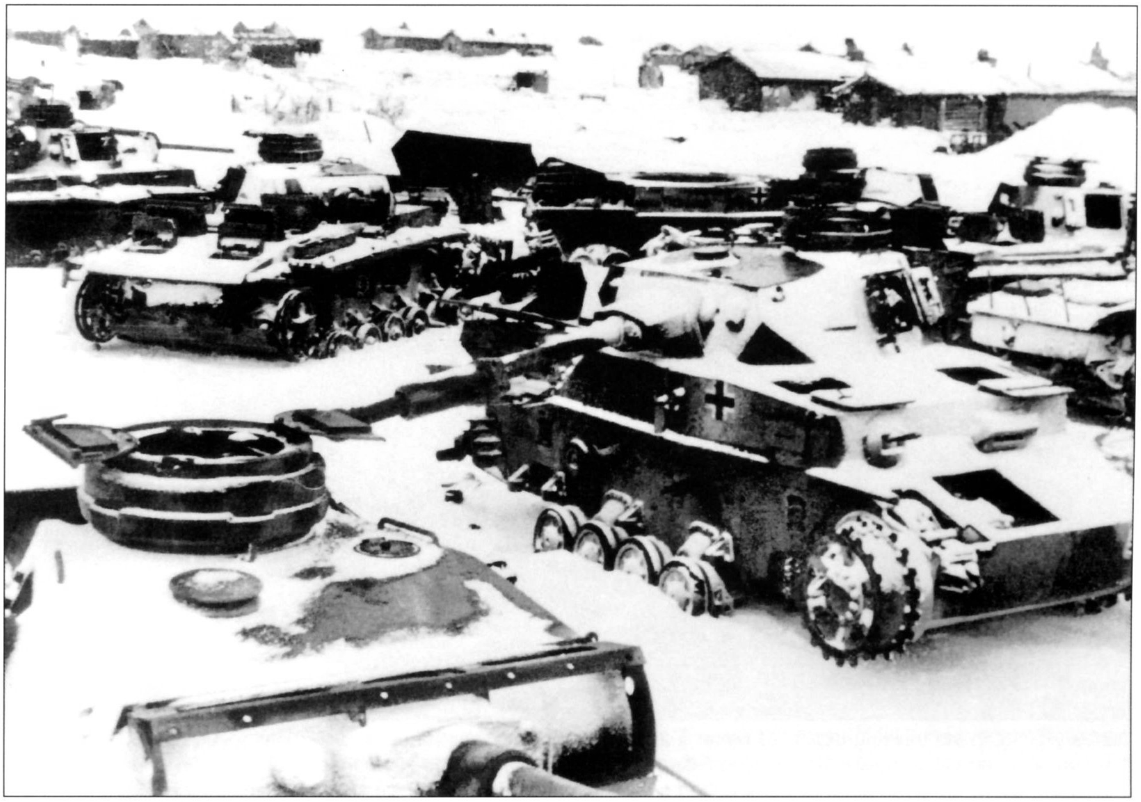


For many kilometers the wreckage of broken divisions littered the area around Stalingrad. This German convoy was caught by artillery, or attack aircraft, or Katyusha rockets, what the Germans called Stalinorgel (Stalin's organ).

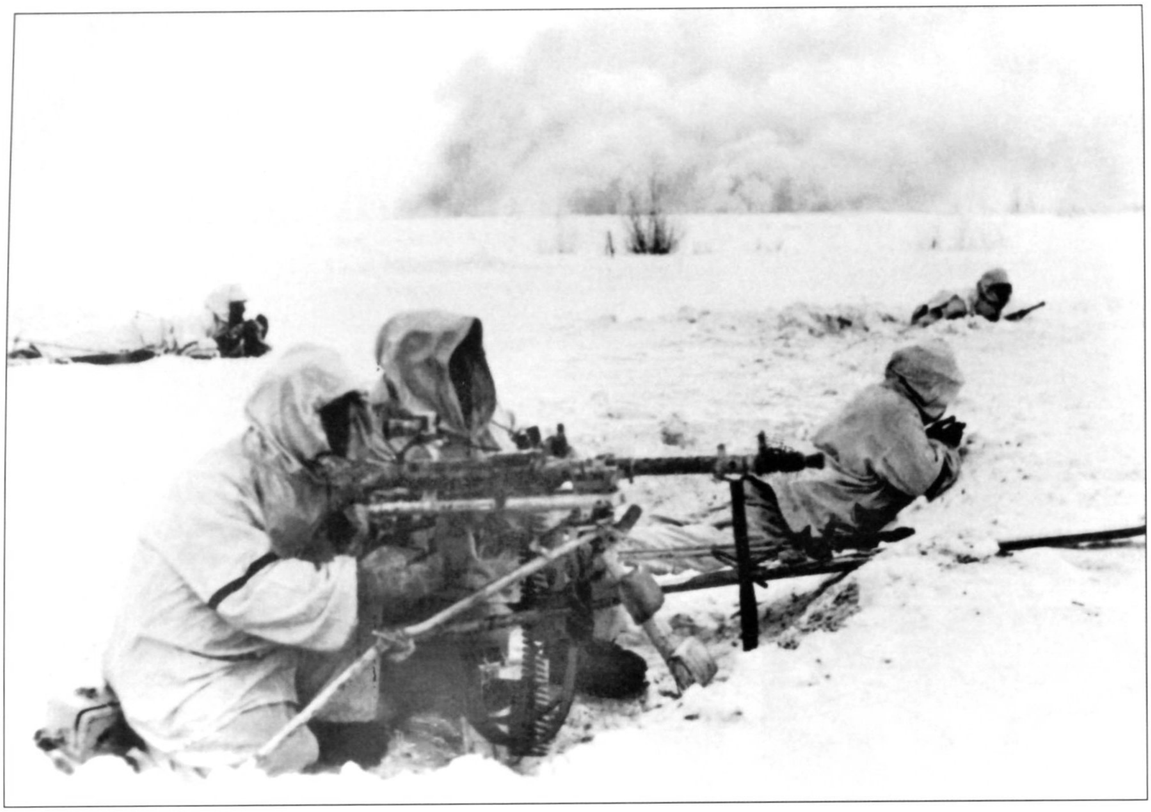
German prisoners captured in December are put on show and marched through Soviet occupied parts of the city. These inadequately clothed soldiers had been resisting in the southern and western parts of the Kessel.

A Panzergrenadier wearing a camouflaged autumn/winter reversible uniform prepares a message for transmission to subordinate units. He appears to be writing a letter.

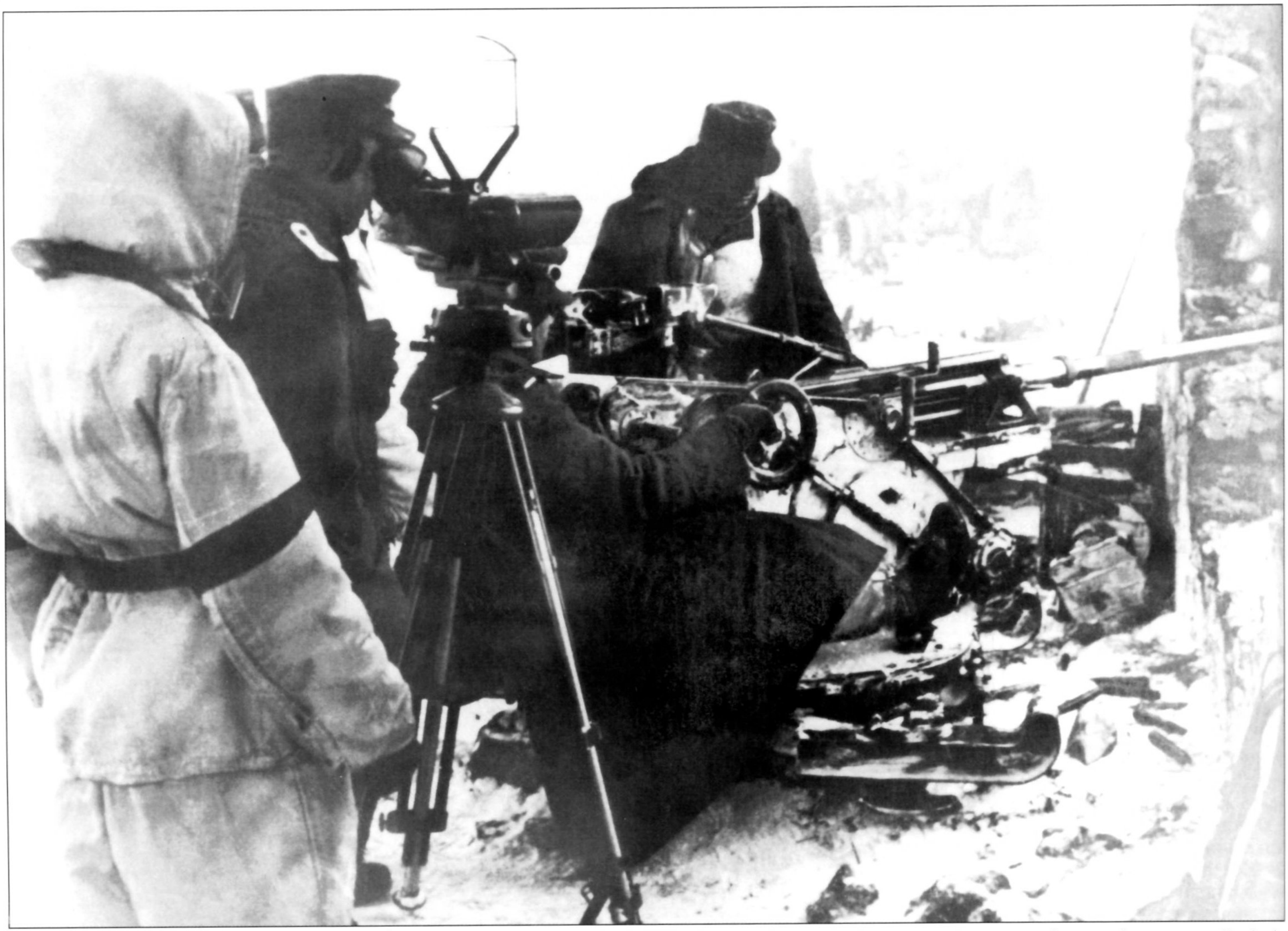
Generalfeldmarschall Erich von Manstein greets Hitler when the Führer visited Heeresgruppe Süd. On von Manstein's right is Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen. Von Manstein was given a Führer Order to perform yet another miracle relief operation and reverse the situation at Stalingrad. Codenamed Wintergewitter (Winter Storm), the German counteroffensive was spearheaded by General Kirchner's 57. Panzer-Korps consisting of 6. Panzer-Division, which boasted some 160 tanks and 40 self-propelled guns, and the mauled 23. Panzer-Division.



In total some 265,000 men, including some 12,000 Rumanians, 1,800 guns, over 100 tanks, and 10,000 assorted vehicles were captured. Some 21,000 horses died, many eaten by starving soldiers. Here battle-damaged Pz.Kpfw. IVs and IIIs were collected and cannibalized for parts to keep others going.



Von Manstein's relief effort. An MG-34 heavy machine gun group from the 6. Panzer-Division opens fire on Soviet positions. With the enemy forces also wearing white snow camouflage clothing, frontline German troops were issued colored arm bands for identification purposes. Colors were changed daily. Despite von Manstein's attempted relief, his units were unable to gain momentum. Instead his force became bogged down in a morass of protracted fighting against two Soviet mechanized corps and two tank brigades. On 18 December, with most of his armor burning and his troops fighting to break through the Aksai Line, von Manstein wearily sent a message to the Oberkommando des Heeres, requesting that the 6. Armee must take immediate steps to initiate a breakout at Stalingrad.



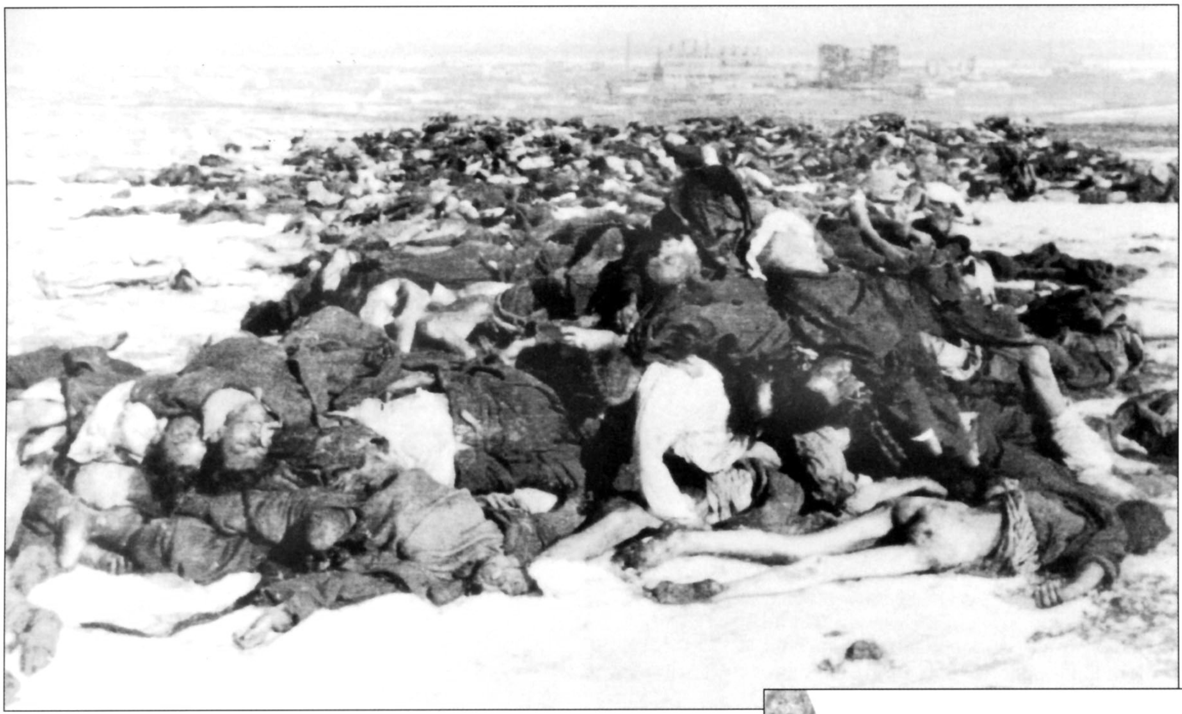
January 1943, in the freezing depths of winter a 2cm FlaK 30 has been set up next to a destroyed building and is being used to repulse enemy attacks in the center of the city. Note the soldier calculating the range of the target. His comrade behind him is dressed in a two-piece umkehrbarer Winteranzug (reversible winter uniform). Colored identification armbands are worn on both sleeves, for which attachment buttons were provided.

Soldiers from 297. Infanterie-Division wearing an assorted collection of snowsuits, greatcoats, and other winter clothing, brave a snowstorm on the outskirts of the city. By January the Red Army had gained the advantage and was beginning to throttle to death more than a quarter of a million German soldiers trapped inside the Kessel.

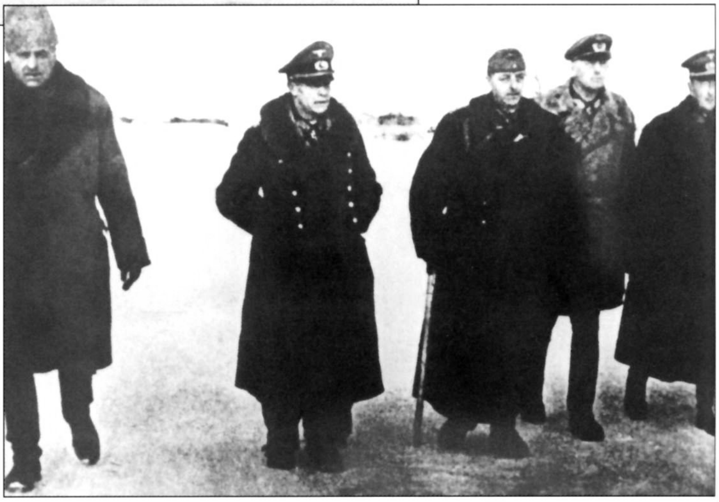
A portrait of Generaloberst Friedrich von Paulus. By late January the commander of 6. Armee was debilitated by dysentery and close to reaching a nervous breakdown. While the remaining pockets of his 6. Armee were crushed by the Soviets, Hilter promoted von Paulus to Generalfeldmarschall knowing that no German soldier of that rank had ever surrendered or been captured alive. His message to von Paulus was clear.

A soldier wearing his insulated winter uniform takes refuge inside a damaged building and uses it as an observation post. One of the main two weaknesses of the German soldier during urbanized fighting was his tendency to avoid close combat, and their belief that tanks must attack before the infantry would move.

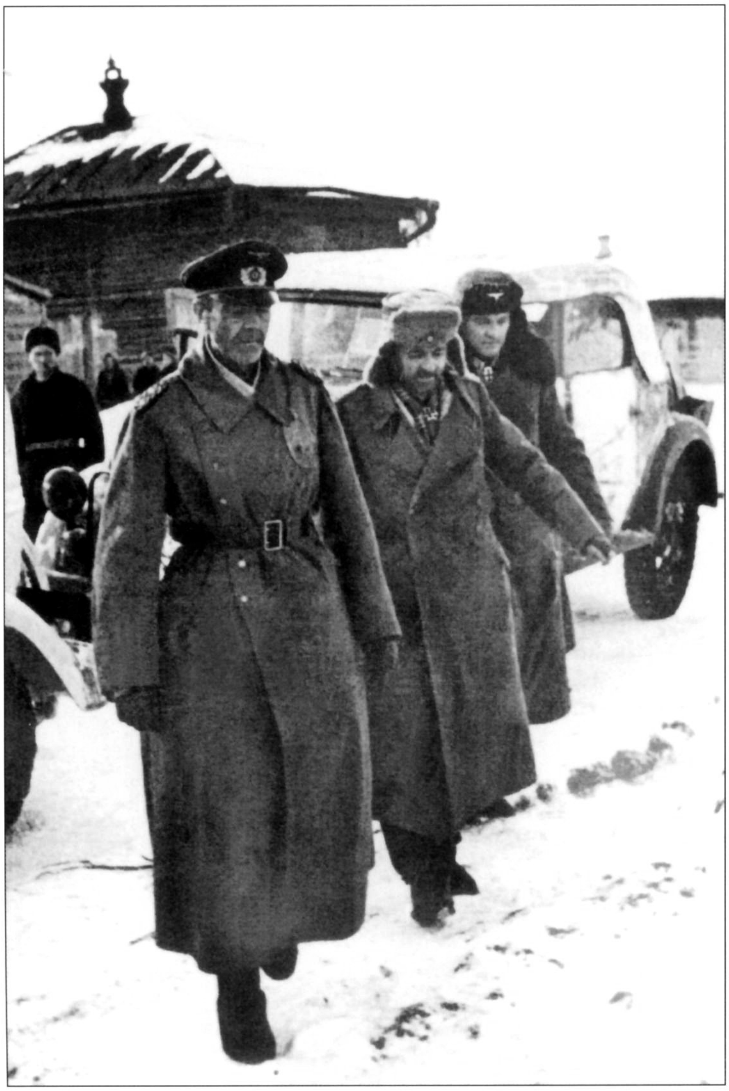
Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring makes a broadcast, his famous Sportspalast speech, on 30 January 1943, comparing the 6. Armee to the Spartans at Thermopylae. The speech was not well received in Stalingrad where it was listened to by the soldiers. Most found it an insult that Göring was in fact delivering their funeral eulogy.



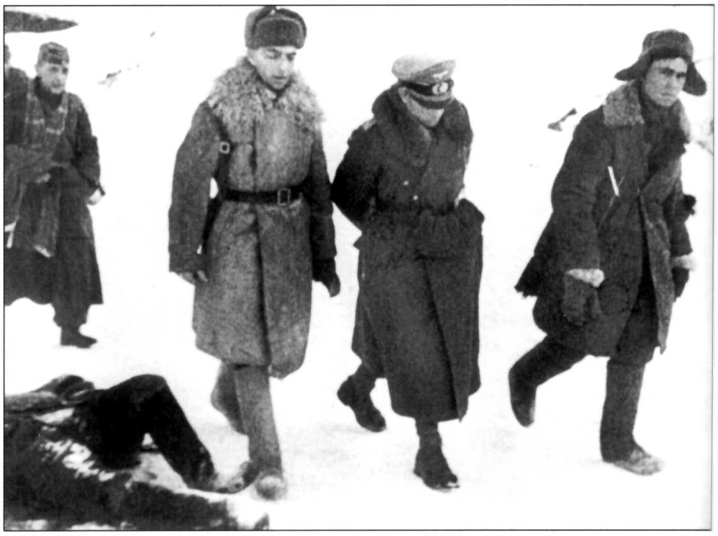
The remains of the 6. Armee. Conditions in the two German pockets inside Stalingrad had been appalling. Without medical supplies and no hope of evacuation, the seriously wounded and gravely ill were placed in the open to freeze to death and end their suffering. Besides combat casualties frostbite, dysentery, tetanus, spotted fever, typhus, pneumonia, gangrene, and starvation took their toll. It was not uncommon for the dead to be looted of the winter clothing. Dysentery was extremely common and known as Russische Krankheit (Russian sickness).



Some of the German generals captured by the Red Army following the surrender of the 6. Armee. Complete identifications are not available, left to right: General Dmitri, Generalleutnant Edler von Daniels, General Schiemer, Major Moritz von Drebber, and General Otto Rinoldi.

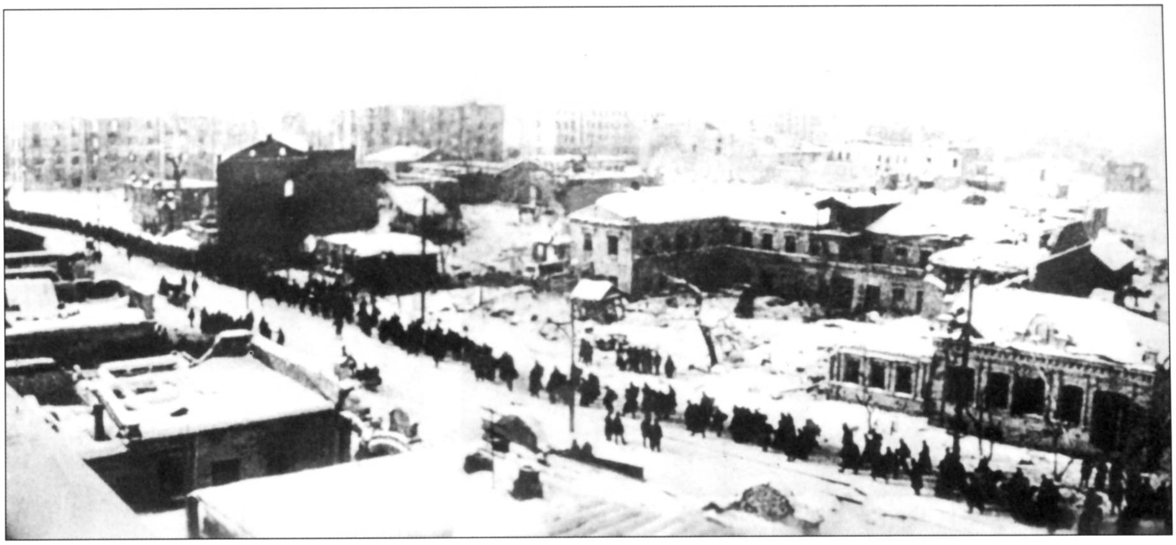


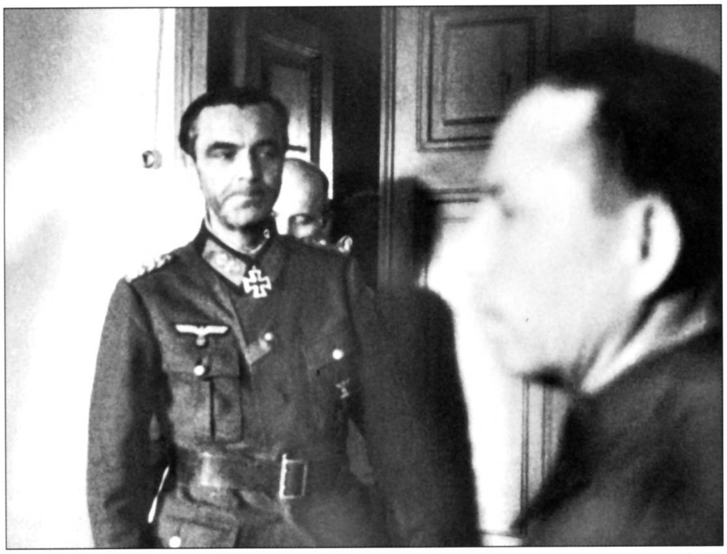
On 31 January 1943 Generalfeldmarschall von Paulus finally surrendered the remnants of 6. Armee holding on inside Stalingrad. Here a weakened von Paulus and two members of his staff are being led from the Univermag Department Store, his headquarters, to be taken to 64th Army Headquarters in Beketovka south of Stalingrad for interrogation.



Generalleutnant Edler von Daniels of the 6. Armee being escorted away for questioning. General von Daniels was commander of the 376. Infanterie-Division. The division had experienced terrible casualties and by the end of the battle was virtually wiped out. In the final throes of the battle the dead were left frozen where they died.

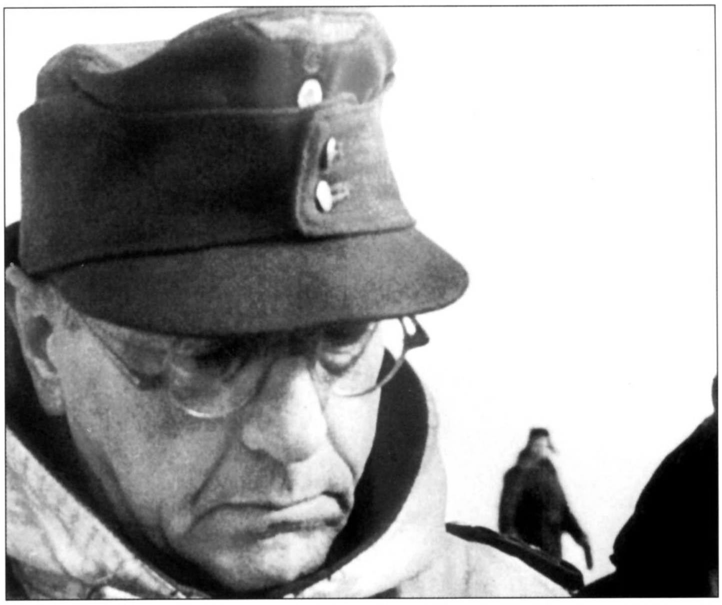
The end of 6. Armee, an eerie silence fell over the city following von Paulus' surrender. Thousands of soldiers from the once mighty 6. Armee shuffle through the ruined streets of Stalingrad in the snow on 2 February. More than 91,000 prisoners, including twenty-two generals and 2,500 other officers were captured. Some 1,200 prisoners were immediately put to work burying the many dead.





The 52-year-old Generalfeldmarschall von Paulus, now gaunt and ill undergoing interrogation. From interrogation reports it was believed that near the end of the battle von Paulus had become a prisoner in his own headquarters, guarded by his chief of staff, Generalleutnant Arthur Schmidt.

More soldiers from 6. Armee surrendered on 2 February. Some of them called out "Hitler kaputt!" as a signal of surrender and an effort to demonstrate they were anti-Hitler. Their fate under Soviet hands as prisoners of war was without mercy, just as worse as Soviet prisoners had suffered under the Germans. The Geneva Convention did not apply to the Ostfront by either side. Thousands would perish from starvation and the terrible cold while others were simply worked to death. Of the 91,000 soldiers who surrendered at Stalingrad, only 5,000 would ever see home again, some not being released until 1955.



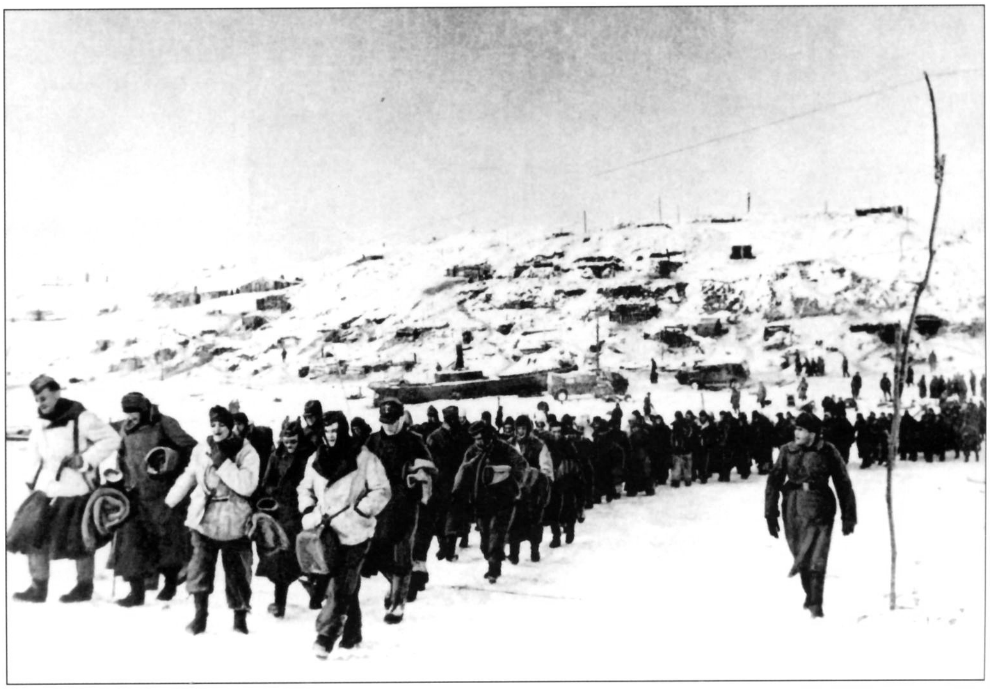
Generalleutnant Werner Sanne, commander of 100. Jäger-Division surrenders with the whole of his staff. When Sanne and over a dozen officers attempted to surrender bursts of machine gun fire were aimed at them from the German lines as the Soviets led them away. The Landser knew what awaited them. As a result two officers were killed. Apparently General der Artillerie Walter Heitz, commanding VIII Armeekorps had issued orders that any soldier attempting to surrender would be fired on.

Thankful, for now, just to be alive, this surrendered German soldier is removing his Soldbuch (pay and service record booklet) to turn over to his captors. Regardless of the duration ad brutality of the battle, for him and thousands of other prisoners the real hardship had only just begun.

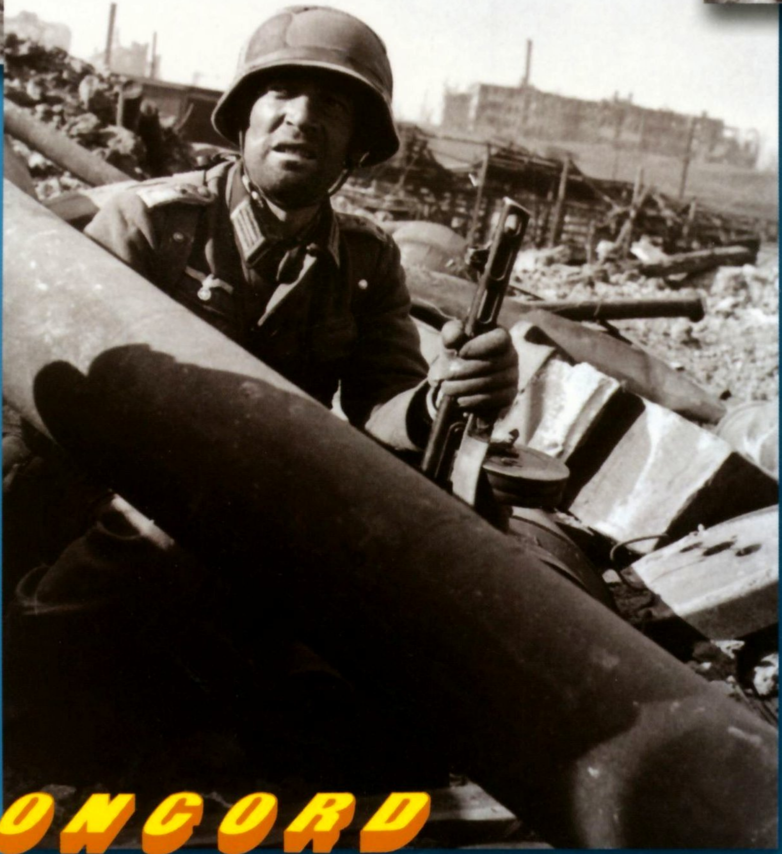
Demoralised soldiers in the biting cold stare as their captors taking photographs of them inside the city. Photographs of demoralized prisoners, especially those who did not fit the “super-human” image were widely published in Soviet newspapers to demonstrate that the Germans were far from invincible. In the first weeks of their captivity they were treated without sympathy and thousands perished. But one of the major causes of death in the prisoner of war camps was typhus. The disease had already reached epidemic proportions prior to the capitulation. In fact, during January 1943 almost fifty thousand German soldiers died of it during the battle.

The defeated made ready their captivity by wrapping the rags from torn from the uniforms of the dead around their worn boots. The men who emerged into the dim sunlight from their cellars, bunkers, and dugouts—Heldenkeller (hero’s cellar)—were totally demoralized after 199 days of brutal combat. Virtually all the soldiers that were marched off to prison camps either suffered from exhaustion or frostbite, many collapsed and died on the way.

The road back to Germany following the catastrophic events at Stalingrad. Not one soldier successfully broke out of the Red Army encirclement of the city. By late January Armeegruppe Don had been forced back beyond the river Donets, over 200 miles from Stalingrad. The retreating Germans had even torn up the railroad tracks to slow the pursuing Soviets. Effectively they were out of reach and unable to relieve the trapped forces doomed inside the besieged city. With the wholesale destruction of 6. Armee the tide had finally turned in the East.



More 6. Armee prisoners. These soldiers had surrendered along the frozen banks of the Volga. Dugouts can be seen in the bluff’s side. For weeks the exhausted remnants of six divisions manned a twenty-mile defense line along the frozen Volga to prevent Soviet crossings. There they froze and died of exposure. These prisoners, however, seem comparatively healthier than those captured inside the city.



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